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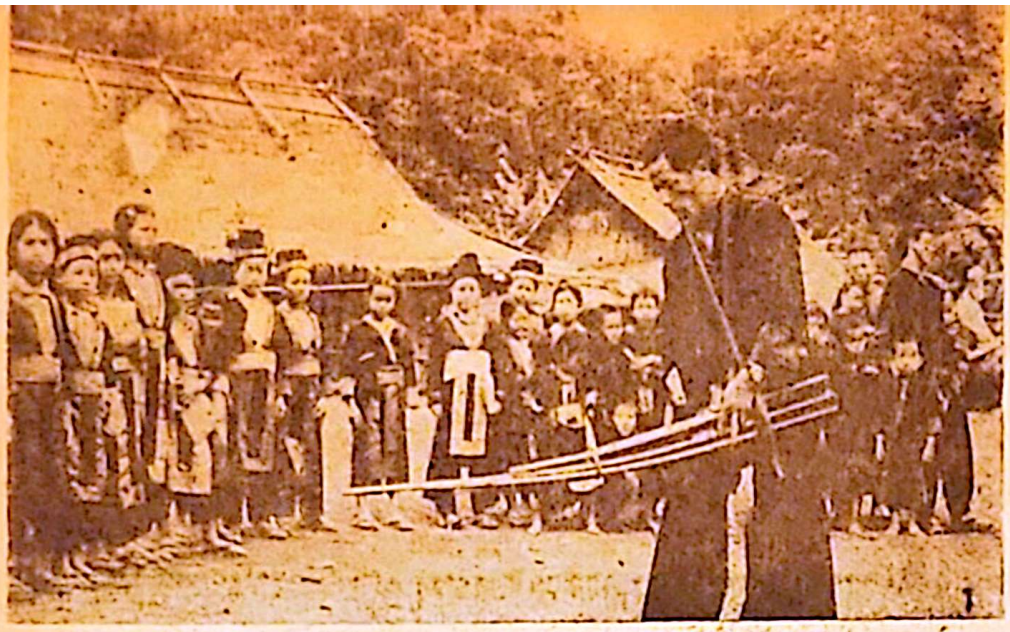
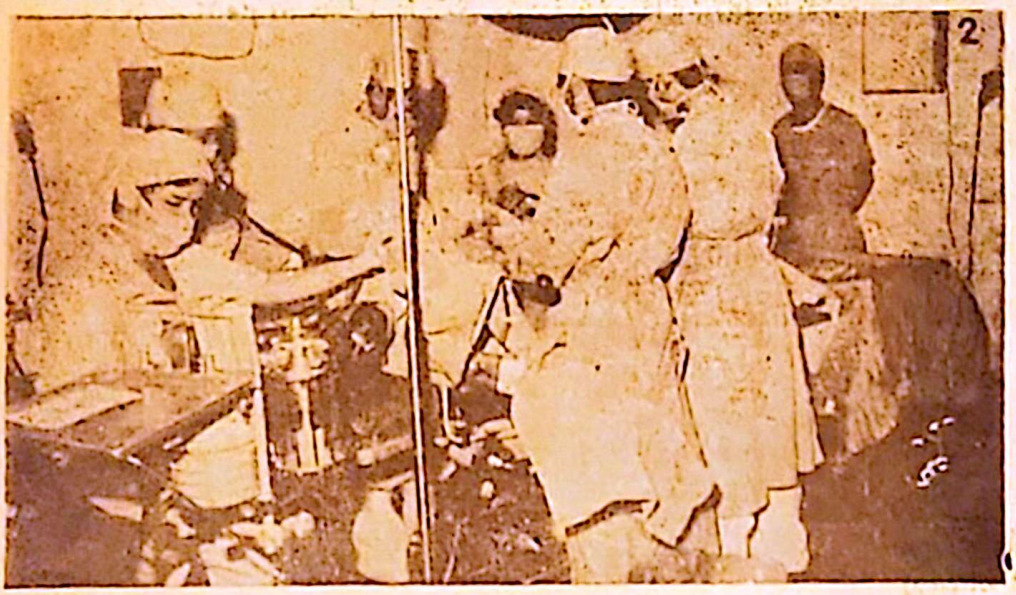


IN THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

1. A folk dance of the Lao Xung people (a Lao ethnic minority) to the music of the khen, the Lao panpipes.

Photo: XUAN TUAN



2. An operation performed at Hospital 103 by Lao surgeons.

Photo: XUAN TUAN

IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KAMPUCHEA

3. Children at an orphanage in Kompong Speu province.

Photo: SPK

PEACE
ONE AND INDIVISIBLE

1984 is drawing to a close, but there seems to be no end to the arms race. For Washington, the deployment in Western Europe of Pershing 2 and Cruise missiles is only a beginning. The White House is bent on securing the initiative for a nuclear first strike, which would knock out the adversary and give him no chance to hit back. And even if he did manage to strike back, the blow would be borne by Bonn, London, Rome, Brussels, Amsterdam, Copenhagen and other capitals. Washington would get away scot-free owing to its ultra-sophisticated technologies and the distance separating it from its enemy.

The man in the White House has rushed and is rushing into the drive for military supremacy with a view to world hegemony. He makes no bones about it. On 22 May this year he made this statement: "I doubt if they (the Soviet Union, Ed.) could expand their military production anyplace beyond where it is right now, or the rate that it is... The only alternative for them is to watch us catch up or sit down at the table with us and work out something in which they won't have to run the risk of someone being superior to them militarily..." Without expatiating upon Mr. Reagan's inability to learn the lessons of history, let's merely note that it is Washington, not Moscow, which has started the escalation.

American militarism, what with its industrial infrastructure, resources and technologies, surpasses all militarisms in history by the means at its disposal. The most redoubtable monsters of all mythologies could not equal the destructive power of its instruments of death, which are kept ready on the ground and in the depths of the seas and may soon be poised in space. At present, the Hiroshima bomb is only a mere toy.

Having installed 1,500 military bases in 32 foreign countries since the end of World War Two, the USA has conducted more than 200 armed interventions in various parts of the earth. The wars it has waged for purposes of aggression or with a view to suppressing revolutions over the past three decades have made no fewer than ten million victims. American imperialism owes blood debts to the peoples of Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea, China, Korea, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Cuba, Guatemala, Chile, Nicaragua, El Salvador... Particularly atrocious was its aggression against the three countries of Indochina — not against Vietnam alone — in which it fielded an expeditionary corps of 550,000 men and dropped on the Indochinese peninsula 15 million tons of ordnance, not counting toxic chemicals.

The world at present is glutted with engines of war and the horror of a war of annihilation is staring mankind in the face. At the root of the ever-increasing tension and the ever more stifling atmosphere is the warlike and hegemonic policy of the United States. It is against this policy that the struggle for peace and disarmament must be spearheaded. Man and civilization must be saved from destruction, and all attempts at playing down the threat of a suicidal world war and the warmongering role of American imperialism will only sow confusion. There can be no limited nuclear war. Likewise, one cannot, as Beijing does, lay the blame for the war danger on "the two nuclear superpowers". Indeed Beijing has made no secret of its wish for a "universal chaos" in which it would zo shan guan hu dou, i.e. "sit on the mountain and watch the tigers fight", until the beasts are all exhausted and can easily be captured.

Contents

- Peace One and Indivisible 1
- Message of Condolences 3
- The Path of Revolutionary Struggle in Laos 4
- Hanoi's Viewpoint
  - Wholehearted Support to the Lao People's Defence of Their Territorial Sovereignty 6
- Xieng Khouang Today 6
- Hanoi's Viewpoint
  - Mr Sihanouk Still a Prisoner of Beijing and the Polpotists? 9
- Beijing's Frontier Policy 11
- A Commune on the Vietnam — China Border 14
- Building up the District Echelon: All-round Development for 400 Districts 16
- Facts and Figures
  - Water Conservation in the District 17
  - Improvement of Pig Breeding in the Collective Sector 18
- An Interview with Vu Tuan, Minister of Food Industry 19
- Tea Growing and Processing in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam 21
- Our State Farms and Their Products 22
- The Year of the Buffalo Will Come One Month Earlier than in the Chinese Calendar 22
- Tropical Fruit for Export 23
- Economic Activities in a City Ward and the Role of the Youth Union 24
- Soldiers Help Build the Local Economy 25
- Cultural Life in a City Ward 25
- Chronology 27
- Index 1984 28

Front Cover: "Militia women and kindergarten children".

This photo was awarded a first prize at the My Homeland International Photo Competition sponsored by the review Soviet Women in 1984.

The author Huu Vuong is a photographer reporter of the journal Vietnamese Women. The photo was taken at a creche in Quang Ba (Hanoi suburbs) in late 1972 when raids were being conducted on the capital Hanoi by US B. 52 strategic bombers.

Vietnam Courier 12-1984

No sooner is he back in power than the man in the White House is baring his fangs at Nicaragua which, with its population of two million, he considers to be a menace to the security of the United States. Barely a year after the American ogre devoured Grenada, the situation again becomes explosive in Central America due to Washington's aggressive policy. Tension has risen everywhere in the world as a result of American collusion with all kinds of reactionary forces: German, Italian and Japanese neo-fascisms, Zionism, upholders of apartheid... In Asia, Washington has found a most zealous partner: the rulers in Beijing. Preparations are under way to set up NEATO (North East Asia Treaty Organization) which would complete the system of encirclement planned by the USA and its confederates around the world socialist community.

In Southeast Asia, Washington is cooperating with Tokyo in lending a hand to Beijing which is seeking to put the genocidal Pol Pot clique back in the saddle and threatening to invade the three Indochinese countries, thereby securing Chinese expansion into this part of the world.

At this juncture, the common struggle of the peoples of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea for the building of socialism and the defence of their homelands is part and parcel of the universal effort to safeguard world peace. The only goal for which the Indochinese countries are striving is to contribute to peace, stability and cooperation in Southeast Asia, in the interest of the whole of mankind as well as in their own interest. They call on their neighbours in the region to work together with them toward this goal. On this planet filled to the brim with nuclear weapons, no responsible government can afford to play with fire: the future of each people and that of the whole of mankind depend on the vigilance of present generations in all countries.

VU CAN

● On 1 November 1984, Le Duan, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee, paid his last homage to the late Indian Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi at the Indian Embassy in Hanoi.

He was accompanied by Vu Quang, member of the C.P.V. Central Committee, Head of the Foreign Relations Commission of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee.

On the same day, Truong-Chinh, President of the SRV Council of State, Pham Van Dong, Chairman of the SRV Council of Ministers, and Nguyen Huu Tho, Vice-President of the Council of State and Chairman of the National Assembly, laid a wreath at the Indian Embassy.

● On 3 November, at the Municipal Theatre in Hanoi, the Vietnam Fatherland Front Central Committee, the Vietnam Committee for Solidarity and Friendship with Other Peoples and the Vietnam — India Friendship Association held a commemorative ceremony.

● In memory of Mrs Indira Gandhi, the SRV Council of Ministers decided that State mourning be observed throughout the country for three days (3 to 5 November) during which the Vietnamese national flag would be flown at half-mast at all government offices and all entertainment activities would be suspended.

● A delegation of the SRV Council of State and Council of Ministers, headed by President Truong-Chinh, left for New Delhi to attend the funeral of the late Indian Prime Minister. The delegation included Minister of Foreign Affairs Nguyen Co Thach and the Vietnamese Ambassador to India, Nguyen Quang Tao.

MESSAGE OF CONDOLENCES

On 1 November 1984, Le Duan, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee, Truong-Chinh, President of the SRV Council of State, and Pham Van Dong, Chairman of the SRV Council of Ministers sent to Zail Singh, President of the Republic of India and Rejiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India the following message:

Excellencies,

We were deeply shocked and grieved by the news of the assassination of Mrs Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India at the hands of reactionary elements. On behalf of the Vietnamese people and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, we extend to you, Mr President and Mr Prime Minister, to the Government and the people of India, and to Mrs Indira Gandhi's family our most heartfelt condolences.

As the respected leader of the Indian people and the loyal and brilliant continuator of the work of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi made great contributions to the defence of national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, to the development of the national economy, the improvement of the people's living standards, and the building of India into a modern nation and an important factor of peace in Asia and the world.

As an eminent figure in the national liberation movement and the Non-Aligned Movement and a tireless fighter for peace, Mrs Indira Gandhi made outstanding contributions to the nations' struggle for peace, independence and social progress.

A great and close friend of the Vietnamese people, Mrs Indira Gandhi, in her lifetime, constantly reserved deep feelings and strong support for the just struggle of the Vietnamese people, and brought important contributions to the consolidation and development of the great friendship and multiform cooperation between the governments and peoples of Vietnam and India.

The death of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi is a most afflicting loss to the Indian people and her family and also a great loss to the Vietnamese people, the Non-Aligned Movement and the whole of progressive mankind.

Sharing your grief, we are deeply convinced that the Indian Government and people will continue to overcome all difficulties and trials and achieve still more brilliant successes in the building and defence of the country, thus contributing to the consolidation of peace in Asia and the rest of the world, and to the enhancement and development of friendship and cooperation between our two governments and peoples.

ON THE OCCASION OF THE NINTH FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY

OF THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

THE PATH OF REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE IN LAOS

Laos is a small country with an underdeveloped economy and backward culture. It was a colonial and semi-feudal country dominated by the French imperialists as early as the 19th century. Before 1930, outstanding Lao personalities and the Lao people at large waged an incessant struggle against the French but to no avail, for lack of a guiding torch.

Ho Chi Minh was the first to introduce Marxism — Leninism into Indochina. The Indochinese Communist Party's 1930 programme pointed out that the revolutionary path for each Indochinese country was to achieve national liberation and advance to socialism, bypassing the stage of capitalist development; that the proletariat was to be the leader of the revolution, and that workers and peasants constituted its main force.

The revolution for national liberation in each Indochinese country entered a new historical period. The first Lao communists overcame many obstacles and difficulties to awaken and organize the people in both urban and rural areas; revolutionary bases were set up and developed everywhere. In August 1945, the Japanese fascists unconditionally capitulated, and the August Revolution in Vietnam triumphed. On 12 October 1945, the Lao people rose up and seized power, which led to the declaration of independence of Laos.

Shortly after, the French staged a comeback in Laos, as well as in Vietnam and Kampuchea. The peoples of Laos, Vietnam and Kampuchea waged a nine-year resistance war against them. In 1950, the Lao Itsala Front (Freedom Front) came into being and the Lao Resistance Government was set up.

The French colonialists suffered repeated failures on the battlefields of Laos, Vietnam and Kampuchea. Their heaviest defeat was at Dien Bien Phu. It compelled them to sign the 1954 Geneva Agreements, which restored peace in the whole of Indochina on the basis of recognition of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Laos, Vietnam and Kampuchea. The Geneva Agreements also recognized the legitimacy of the Lao revolutionary forces in the two provinces of Phongsaly and Sam Neua, which were determined as the latter's regroupment zone and put under the control of the Lao revolution.

In the period after 1954, the US imperialists ousted the French and intended to turn Laos into a new-type colony and military base. The Indochinese peoples now had to face an even more powerful and perfidious enemy than before.

The years between 1954 and 1975 were a period of extremely fierce and complicated struggle, and also of great victory for the Lao revolution. The Lao People's Revolutionary Party, which came into being on 22 March 1955, had to undergo many trials. By applying imaginative and judicious strategies and tactics, on three occasions the Lao revolution forced the enemy to agree on the formation of a coalition government. Although twice betrayed by the enemy, the revolutionary forces grew stronger and stronger, and scored greater and greater victories.

This period can be divided into two stages. The first began in late July 1954. The revolutionary struggle was then aimed at thwarting the US imperialists' and their henchmen's scheme of using political deceit and counter-revolutionary violence to eliminate the two resistance bases of Phongsaly and Sam Neua, and destroy the revolutionary forces and the achievements of the Lao revolution.

The Lao Patriotic Front was broadened, and the revolutionary armed forces were strengthened. The two provinces which served as bases for the resistance were firmly protected and political struggle was started in both the capital and the provinces to compel the enemy to enter into serious negotiations. Confronted with the masses' fighting strength and the solidity of the two resistance bases, on 12 October 1957 the US imperialists and their lackeys had to sign the Vientiane Agreement, which led to the formation of the first coalition government with the participation of the Lao Patriotic Front (Neo Lao Haksat).

In the next stage, the US imperialists and their lackeys had to recognize the first bipartite coalition government, but they did not give up their attempt to annihilate the revolutionary forces. They tried to get the latter out of their two resistance bases in order to destroy them more easily. At the same time, they resorted to intimidation, division, bribery and deceit, seeking to destroy the revolution's force and prestige. But the People's Revolutionary Party held high the banner of peace, neutrality and national concord and forced the coalition government to amend the constitution and introduce some progressive provisions such as the confirmation of democratic freedoms, the equality between men and women, and between various nationalities, etc. Legal conditions were thus created for the people to continue their struggle to safeguard peace and social progress. The masses' political struggles developed in legal and semi-legal forms; the forces of peace and neutrality came into being; the right-wing reactionary faction became more divided and isolated than ever before. Frightened by the vigorous development of the revolution, on 18 August 1959, the US imperialists urged the Phoui Sannanikone reactionary group to stage a coup d'etat against the coalition government so as to sabotage the Vientiane Agreement. Thousands of patriots were arrested and massacred, the people repressed, and the Second Battalion, a revolutionary force which had entered into coalition with the Vientiane faction, was encircled. They also illegally imprisoned a number of revolutionary leaders who were in Vientiane then.

In view of this situation, the Lao People's Revolutionary Party continued to hold aloft the banner of peace, neutrality and national concord, while arousing the people and coordinating their political struggle with the military struggle on a

nation-wide scale. Political struggle intensified in many towns. The Second Battalion withdrew safely to its base, the detained revolutionary leaders escaped from prison, many officers, soldiers, policemen and officials of the puppet government crossed over to the revolutionary side. As a result, a patriotic coup d'etat was staged on 9 August 1960 in Vientiane. The Lao People's Revolutionary Party gave active support to the authors of the coup, and helped them to set up a new government pursuing a policy of peace, neutrality and national concord.

Taking advantage of the legitimacy of the new government, we managed to enlist official aid from Vietnam and the Soviet Union, secure an all-round development of our forces, especially the armed forces, expand the resistance area, and form a liberated zone extending from north to south and covering two-thirds of the national territory with one-third of the population. The right-wing reactionary faction launched many attacks but they all met with failure. In the end, they had to agree to hold a tripartite conference and sign the Geneva Agreement on Laos on 23 July 1962, which led to the formation of the second provisional national coalition government.

* * *

The US imperialists sought to take advantage of the Geneva Agreement to consolidate and strengthen the puppet forces, in preparation for a "special war" strategy in Laos. Vis-à-vis the coalition government, they resorted to cajolery, division, blandishment, terror and assassination. In mid-1964 they launched many large-scale offensives against the liberated zone in every part of the country. The Lao People's Revolutionary Party again held high the banner of justice, that of struggle against US imperialism for national salvation. It brought into play the combined strength of the whole nation and the alliance with the Vietnamese people. Our Party at that time combined a resolute offensive strategy with flexible tactics in order to confine the struggle within the tripartite coalition and check the US "special war" in Laos. Early in 1967, after the armed forces of the imperialists and their lackeys had sustained heavy setbacks in their attempts to encroach on the liberated zone, Johnson's "special war" was defeated. The US "local war" in Vietnam also met with failure. In 1969, the Nixon Administration had to turn to a new strategy, in which it used all available forces, intensified the "special war" in Laos, escalated the war in both North and South Vietnam, and expanded their war of aggression into Kampuchea.

However, the US imperialists and their agents continued to suffer repeated setbacks, while the revolutionary forces were gaining ever greater momentum and the liberated area was extended, covering four-fifths of the national territory with two-thirds of the population.

Facing the possibility of complete failure in their war of aggression against the three Indochinese countries, the US imperialists had to sign the Paris Agreement (27 January 1973), withdraw US troops from South Vietnam, and sign the Vientiane Agreement on Laos on 21 February 1973. Peace was restored, the Provisional National Coalition Government and the National Coalition Political Council were set up. Those were victories of great significance for the Lao revolution during 18 years of struggle against US imperialism, for national liberation.

Relying on the juridical basis brought by the Vientiane Agreement, our Party changed its methods of struggle. It attached great importance to the people's political struggle, continued to consolidate and develop the revolutionary forces in both town and countryside, actively built up the armed forces, consolidated the liberated zone in every respect, and created a seething movement in all urban, rural and mountain areas, demanding that all US-aid organizations be dissolved, all US advisers be pulled out, and US agents be dismissed from all levels of the administration.

In mid-1975, with the victory of the fraternal Vietnamese people's general offensive, revolutionary conditions were ripe in Laos. Within a short time, the Lao People's Revolutionary Party led the entire army and people to wage an offensive on all front to wrest back power to the people. The Lao People's Democratic Republic was established in December 1975, ushering in a new era for our country.

Since then, the Lao People's Revolutionary Party has led our country in its advance to socialism bypassing the stage of capitalist development. We are well aware of both the advantages and difficulties of this road. Although the transition to socialism will take a long time, we are determined to take this path. Our Party regards socialist industrialization as the country's central task throughout the period of transition, a task which is to be carried out step by step and with various priorities.

In Southeast Asia, Laos, Vietnam and Kampuchea have become an outpost of the socialist system. The reactionary clique in the Beijing leadership have worked hand in glove with the imperialists and other reactionary forces and have become the dangerous direct enemy of the Lao revolution. They are seeking to undermine the Lao revolution and weaken it, to sow division among the three Indochinese countries and create discord between Laos and the Soviet Union and other socialist countries with a view to carrying out their expansionist design in this region. Therefore, the struggle for national independence and sovereignty, and the struggle between socialism and capitalism in our country are intertwined and at times grow very fierce and complicated. Our two strategic tasks of safeguarding the country and building socialism are closely connected.

Since 1975, the Lao people have recorded initial achievements in socialist transformation and construction: proletarian dictatorship has been firmly consolidated; State-run economic establishments have been built and developed; the transformation of non-socialist economic sectors is under way and has achieved some successes, especially in agricultural cooperativization. We have made important progress in educational reforms and the development of a new, socialist culture. The people's living con-

ditions have been steadily improved. No force can hinder our march forward.

The victory of the Lao revolution testifies to the fact that in our times, even a small nation with an underdeveloped economy cannot be dominated by imperialism and international reaction, no matter how mighty their economic and military forces are, when its working people are politically conscious and determined to take their destiny into their own hands, and when a powerful world socialist system with the Soviet Union as its mainstay has been established and is determined to safeguard peace and support the revolutionary cause of the world's people.

The Lao revolution is part of the revolution in the Indochinese countries and in the world. The relationship between these three countries has its root in history. In the national democratic revolution, the solidarity and mutual assistance between Laos, Vietnam and Kampuchea were one of the fundamental factors of the victories of the revolution in each country. At present, in their efforts for national defence and socialist construction, the three countries share the same ideals and objectives, while each country, due to its particular characteristics and conditions, has its own lines, policies, methods, forms and steps of development. As all three countries are advancing from a small-scale production, their requirements for economic and social development are similar. Hence, the solidarity, mutual assistance, and cooperation between the three must be consolidated and developed for the sake of each country's vital interests.

At the same time, we regard our solidarity and all-round cooperation with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries as having the character of an objective law. We also advocate solidarity and cooperation with every revolutionary movement throughout the world.

(Excerpts from the speech delivered by the delegation of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party at the Conference of Heads of Scientific Research Departments under the Central Committees of Communist and Workers' Parties, held in Hanoi from 4 to 6 April 1984.)

HANOI'S VIEWPOINT

The occupation of the three Lao border hamlets of May, Kang and Savang by Thai troops has aroused strong indignation in the world. This is part of Bangkok's expansionist scheme. It transcends the sphere of Lao—Thai relations and directly threatens peace and security in the region.

Faced with the resolute struggle of the Lao people and condemned by world opinion, Thailand has resorted to smokescreens, pretending falsely that "Thai troops have withdrawn from the three hamlets" and that "the issue has been solved".

The 26 October 1984 Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Lao People's Democratic Republic points out that Thailand has not really withdrawn its forces from Lao territory, and has not given up its occupation of the three hamlets and its expansionist scheme at the expense of Laos. Facts show that Thai troops are still occupying parts of these hamlets, shelling the neighbourhood, and stepping up the building of military posts on surrounding heights. Thailand has not returned the one thousand people from those hamlets who where abducted to Thailand. Worse still, in recent days, the Commander-in-Chief of the Thai Army has persisted in proclaiming that the three hamlets belong to Thailand.

All this shows that the Thai ultra-rightist reactionaries are pursuing a hostile policy toward the Lao people and persisting in their

XIENG KHOUANG TODAY

Crossing the border at Nam Can, we came to Noong Het district town, called by some the "capital of the Meo national minority". On the high peaks and along Route 7 hugging the mountain sides, white ban flowers were blooming.

In the two Indochina wars, the French colonialists, then the American imperialists paid keen attention to Noong Het. They built along Route 7 a dense network of military posts in an attempt to keep watch over the region, destroy the revolutionary bases, and suppress the patriotic movement.

Under the old regime, the Noong Het people led a nomadic life and

WHOLEHEARTED SUPPORT TO THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEFENCE OF THEIR TERRITORIAL SOVEREIGNTY

collusion with Beijing in order to carry out a policy of confrontation against the Indochinese peoples and try to "bleed" them. Such a policy is unreasonable and impractical. The Thai people and quite a few clear-headed Thai politicians do not accept it. This is a reactionary policy which will bring disastrous consequences to its authors and supporters.

The Lao Government and people have shown a principled stand and a good-will attitude in their relations with Thailand: they resolutely defend the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Laos, while persisting in their foreign policy of peace and standing ready to solve all problems through negotiation and to negotiate with Thailand at any time. Everybody is watching Thailand's attitude and it would be a mistake for Bangkok to think that it can carry on its adventurous military schemes.

The Vietnamese people fully approve of the legitimate demands of the Lao people: Thailand should withdraw all its troops from Lao territory — not just move its troops from this to that position — stop all attempts at intimidation and harassment in the vicinity of the three Lao hamlets, immediately return all people from those hamlets who have been abducted to Thailand, and compensate them for all damage caused.

This is a just stand, a legitimate proposal, and a logical and reasonable solution aimed at ending the tension on the Lao — Thai border as well as in the relations between the two countries. This principled stand conforms to the wish of the two peoples and will contribute to the consolidation of peace and stability in Indochina and the whole of Southeast Asia.

The Vietnamese people and the Lao people are bound together by a special militant solidarity. We shall always side with the fraternal Lao people and wholeheartedly support their struggle to defend their territorial sovereignty.

Nhan Dan Editorial
29 October 1984

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grew dry rice, maize, and opium poppy for a living. Owing to the whims of nature, they frequently suffered from food shortages. Impoverished by the colonialists and feudalists, they were also kept by them in the darkness of ignorance. In periods of famine, they had to go down to the lowlands to beg for food and clothing. Schools and hospitals were conspicuous by their absence and superstitious practices prevailed.

Today, the Noong Het inhabitants have left the mountain tops and settled in the valleys to practise wet-rice cultivation. The district has 5,000 hectares of ricefields and 3,000 hectares of maize fields. Thanks to the new farming methods, yields have unceasingly increased. Formerly living in want, the Noong Het people now produce enough food for themselves and can even sell to the State over 300 tons of paddy per year. Schools have been built in every village and 8,000 people have been freed from illiteracy. By the end of 1985, primary education will have been dispensed to all.

Starting from Noong Het, we took Route 7, crossed the Nam Tien

and Nam Mat bridges and came to Muong Kham (or Vang), a district with 10 communes, 130 villages, a population of 22,000 and 20,000 hectares of ricefields. This district is known for its plentiful crops of rice and high-quality tea and tobacco.

During the war against the US aggressors, Muong Kham was an important resistance base. The Vientiane rightist elements occupied Theng Choong and Buon Long with nine battalions commanded by Colonel Chopaomua, Vang Pao's father-in-law. From there they made repeated attacks on Muong Kham and tried to advance to Noong Het and Sam Neua so as to seize the whole liberated zone of the patriotic forces. Seeing through the enemy's scheme, the Xieng Khouang military command resolutely defended Muong Kham and used it as a springboard to liberate the Plain of Jars and Xieng Khouang.

Today, Muong Kham has put on a new face. The Ban Ban townlet lying at the intersection of Routes 7 and 6 has been rebuilt into a bustling centre. The district boasts a 50-bed hospital, a second-level (junior secondary) general-education school, a textile mill and a State store. The peasants in the district have embarked on the road of collective production, and set up 50 agricultural cooperatives, 5 of which, by practising intensive culture, have obtained paddy yields of 2.5 — 3 tons per hectare. Fourteen irrigation canals totalling 5,000 metres in length have been built together with a water reservoir at Dooc Kham.

At Phonsavan, capital of Xieng Khouang province, which had been destroyed during the war, we saw on the hilltops many newly-built buildings: the offices of the provincial Party Committee and Administrative Committee, the cultural house, post-office, hospital, school, State store, guest house... At the bustling market, succulent fruits were on sale: orange and banana, and particularly the "mac choong", a fruit with a yellow skin and soft pulp as delicious as a pear's. The prices of rice, maize, meat, fish and other agricultural and forest products are only half the amounts one has to pay in Vientiane.

This is the outcome of the post-war effort for economic restoration. In Xieng Khouang province, over 20,000 hectares of land have been cleared and 132 irrigation works built to water 14,000 hectares of ricefields. Fruit trees are grown in all villages and the herd of cattle is increasing rapidly.

Near Phonsavan is the Plain of Jars, an area of 16,000 square kilometres lying 1,000 metres above sea level, green with vegetation in spring. Hundreds of stone jars, of various sizes, are reminders of a glorious past of struggle against foreign aggressions and creation of an original architecture by the Lao people. In the last war against US aggression, the Plain of Jars was the scene of bloody battles fought by the patriotic forces, especially against the Kou Kiet Operation launched by a force comprising 50 Lao puppet battalions and 5,000 Thai mercenaries supported by 300 — 400 US planes. Near the fields of stone jars, a modern airfield has been built to serve the defence and economic development of Laos. A cattle breeding farm set up at Lat Xen with Soviet assistance and a sheep rearing farm built at Khang Xi with Mongolian help are two of the seven largest farms built here.

At a meeting with a Vietnamese team coming to help Laos build roads in the Plain of Jars, Udon Khattinah, Secretary of the Xieng Khouang provincial Party Committee, said: "Thank you for your priceless assistance. In our resistance war you helped us build armed forces to defend our territory. Many Vietnamese sacrificed their lives for the liberation of Laos. After liberation, you've come to help us build offices, factories, hospitals, schools and particularly roads and bridges. It is thanks to Vietnamese assistance that our province has scored signal successes in both combat and construction and has obtained the title of "Heroic Province".

NGUYEN THE NGHIEP

MR SIHANOUK STILL A PRISONER OF BEIJING AND THE POLPOTISTS?

Mr Sihanouk is a man with the gift of the gab. Recently, he has been holding forth in Washington. But what he has done is merely to repeat the allegations made by the Beijing and other reactionaries over the past years and aimed at attacking Vietnam and the other Indochinese countries.

He has emphasized three points:

Firstly, Vietnam "invaded" Kampuchea;

Secondly, Vietnam has "moved her citizens" into Kampuchea;

Thirdly, the world must "bring pressure to bear upon Vietnam to get her to withdraw her forces from Kampuchea," and "to allow the Kampuchean people to exercise their right to self-determination".

Mr Sihanouk is well aware that during the two recent wars of resistance, against the French colonialists then the American imperialists, Vietnamese volunteers twice fought in Kampuchea side by side with Kampuchean revolutionary armed forces and then returned home when the fighting was over. Since 1975, the reactionaries among the ruling circles in Beijing have used the Pol Pot clique to carry out genocide against the Kampuchean people. They killed five of Sihanouk's children and fourteen of his grandchildren, invaded Vietnamese territory and sabotaged Laos's security. In response to the call of the National United Front for the Salvation of Kampuchea, Vietnamese units, together with the revolutionary armed forces of Kampuchea, toppled the genocidal regime of Pol Pot and put an end to the horrible disaster befalling the Kampuchean people. The Vietnamese forces are staying in Kampuchea according to the Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation signed between the two countries to carry out their internationalist obligation, and will go back to Vietnam when the People's Republic of Kampuchea so requests and as soon as the danger of a return of the Pol Pot clique no longer exists. This is a just action done in the interests of the three Indochinese peoples and which the Kampuchean people themselves highly appreciate. In face of the wicked designs of the expansionists and imperialists, the peoples of Vietnam and Kampuchea must unite for the sake of their survival. It is those very people who have caused so much mourning to the Kampuchean nation and are now nurturing the Pol Pot gang who are loudly calling for the Vietnamese volunteers' total and unconditional withdrawal so that they can reinstall the genocidal regime in Kampuchea.

They have left no stone unturned to fan up narrow nationalism and anti-Vietnam sentiment among the Kampuchean people. They have fabricated the story of "Vietnamese emigration" to Kampuchea. Mr Sihanouk surely knows that before 1970 when he was still in power, the number of Vietnamese residents in Kampuchea amounted to over 500,000. Under the Pol Pot rule, a great number of them were massacred. Many survivors fled back to Vietnam. After 1 July 1979, Vietnamese nationals then held in Pol Pot concentration camps and those who had taken refuge on Vietnamese soil were allowed by the Government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea to go back to their former places of residence. However, by the end of the year 1983, the number of Vietnamese who had re-settled in Kampuchea was only 56,000, i.e. one-tenth of the earlier figure and much less than the present number of Chinese residents in Kampuchea. That is the true situation and yet Mr Sihanouk calls it the "Vietnamization" and "colonization" of

Kampuchea. One should remind him that the claim of the Hitlerite fascists that "a lie that is repeated a hundred times may eventually become a truth" is no longer valid.

What about his call for pressuring Vietnam into withdrawing her volunteers from Kampuchea? The reactionaries have not waited for Mr Sihanouk's call to clamour for this withdrawal. For the past six years, they have resorted to all kinds of measures, military and political, economic and diplomatic, to pressure Vietnam into withdrawing her forces on the one hand, and to attack the three Indochinese countries on the other. But all to no avail! Meanwhile, the resurrection of the Kampuchean people has been a real miracle. The People's Republic of Kampuchea is getting stronger and stronger and its prestige in the world arena is on the increase.

Many politicians and many countries, including some ASEAN countries, have admitted that the "policy of the stick", the attempts to "bleed Vietnam", to "apply pressure on her", etc., have come to nothing and that it is time for the two sides to enter into dialogue with a view to seeking a settlement that is in the interests of both sides. This must have been perceived by Mr Sihanouk himself. Recently, during his visit to Sweden, Mr Olaf Palmer told him that Sweden absolutely did not recognize the so-called "tripartite government", in which there are representatives of the genocidal Pol Pot clique, and that with regard to the Heng Samrin Government it is negotiations, not military actions, that should be resorted to.

After six years of building, the People's Republic of Kampuchea has become an entity that cannot be negated. The Kampuchean people have really revived, — a fact which Mr Sihanouk, a victim of the genocidal Pol Pot regime, should have welcomed. The Kampuchean people are exercising their right to self-determination. For them the right to self-determination is expressed first and foremost in the right to live in the way they have chosen. The Kampuchean people and the world's people are determined not to let anyone bring the genocidal Pol Pot clique back to power in Kampuchea once again.

On the withdrawal of armed forces from Kampuchea, the stand of both the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the People's Republic of Kampuchea is quite clear. The Vietnamese volunteers will withdraw from Kampuchea completely when the Chinese threat and the danger of a comeback by the Pol Pot gang no longer exist, and when Kampuchea's security is ensured. So long as the attempt is not given up to impose a solution aimed at staging a comeback of the genocidal clique sabotaging the Kampuchean people's resurrection and endangering Vietnam and Laos, there can be no peace and stability in Southeast Asia. The Pol Pot gang is the main tool of the Chinese ruling circles' policy of expansionism and hegemonism. This is the main reason for the disruption of peace and stability in the three Indochinese countries in particular, and in Southeast Asia in general. To get rid of the Pol Pot clique, not to demand a total and unilateral withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Kampuchea, is an urgent requirement for restoring peace to this region.

Mr Sihanouk has learnt bitter lessons at the hands of the Pol Pot clique and its masters. In recent months, Pol Pot troops have unceasingly attacked his men taking refuge on Thai soil. Has he forgotten that it was the Americans and the Chinese who toppled him and killed several million of his compatriots? What a poor memory he has! The policy of the Government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea is broadminded and devoted to Kampuchea's supreme interests: any former collaborator of the Pol Pot clique, who now sides with the people and honours the Constitution will enjoy civic rights, i.e. the right to vote and to stand for election in the People's Republic of Kampuchea. Whether or not the marriage between Mr Sihanouk and the genocidal Pol Pot clique has been a forced union, it has been very detrimental to him. It is a great tragedy for a man with scores of relatives slain by that genocidal gang to find himself now at the service of those murderers and their masters, and acting counter to the interests of his people and homeland. It is also a great mistake for him to repeat the slanders concocted by the genocidal clique and its masters to attack the Vietnamese people, the faithful and sincere friends of the Kampuchean people bound to them by fraternity and internationalism.

Nhan Dan Editorial
6 November 1984

BEIJING'S FRONTIER POLICY

During the several thousand years of feudal China's history, successive dynasties systematically carried out a crafty frontier policy in order eventually to seize smaller countries or at least, to impose on them Chinese suzerainty.

China's neighbours were regarded as barbarians or enemies, and their countries as mere "fences and stockades" serving China's defence. Many nations had to pay tribute to the Celestial Empire, failing which they would be punished by armed invasion.

The expansionist ambitions of the "Central Empire" date from very early times. In 128 B.C., Emperor Wu Ti of the Han dynasty sent Zhang Qian on a mission to Tadjuk, to the west of China, thus starting China's "westward thrust". After it had, by political and military action, conquered all the areas constituting the present Chinese subcontinent, China began a seaward expansion. In 1405, Emperor Chengzu of the Ming dynasty sent 78 sea-going junks with 27,000 troops under Muslim general Zheng He from Yunnan province, to countries in the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean, as far as the Persian Gulf and East Africa. Afterwards, Zheng He and his fleet were sent on six more expeditions, all for the purpose of subjugating more vassals and extending the influence of the Celestial Empire.

It should be noted that initially the territory of the Han was confined to the basins of the Yellow River and the Wei River, and was not much larger then the territory of present-day Vietnam. Through bloody wars of aggression, bloodless seizures, wrangles and exchanges,... China's territory was gradually expanded and now covers over 9,600,000 square kilometres.

On the day of its foundation in 1949, the People's Republic of China had common borders with twelve countries: Vietnam, Laos, Burma, Bhutan, Sikkim, Nepal, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Mongolia, the Soviet Union and Korea. The land frontiers of China totalled over 14,000 km.

But long before, the future leaders of "New China" had been nurturing the ambition of changing their country's historical frontiers.

As early as 1939, when the Chinese Communist Party was still striving to consolidate the liberated zone and rally the resistance forces into an anti-Japanese national front, Mao Zedong already spoke of his expansionist dream in his book **The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party:**

"After defeating China, the imperialist powers seized China's dependencies. The Japanese seized Korea, Taiwan, Liu Chiu, the Peng Hu and Dairen peninsulas; the British seized Burma, Bhutan, Hong Kong; the French occupied Annam, and the Portuguese, Macao."

The list of China's "lost territories" did not then mention any part of the territory of the Soviet Union later claimed by the Chinese because, as Ho Kan Chi wrote in his **History of China's Contemporary Revolution**, Volume II, after the Japanese militarists extended their aggression against China in July 1937, "the Chinese resistance received considerable aid from the Soviet Union".

But after they had gained control of the whole of China, the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party thought that the opportunity had come for them to realize their expansionist and hegemonist dream. In 1951, Beijing published a map of China with its sea frontier reaching as far as the Jummo Shoal, which was given the Chinese name of Zengmu Shoal, this place lying at only a few dozen kilometres off the coast of Malaysia. The Chinese have later brazenly declared that areas amounting to 80 per cent of the Bien Dong Sea and the islands lying therein, including Vietnam's Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelagoes, are Chinese territory.

In 1954, China's official publishing house published **An Outline of China's Contemporary History.** It contained a map of "Chinese territories seized by foreign powers" which comprised part of the Soviet Far East and Central Asia, Mongolia, Korea, Assam, Sikkim, Bhutan, Burma, Nepal, Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea, the Sulu and Liu Chiu archipelagoes.

The Chinese leadership resorted not only to threats, but also to acts of naked aggression. In 1956, they sent troops to occupy the eastern part of Vietnam's Hoang Sa archipelago which was then under the management of the Saigon Administration. In 1962, they attacked and seized vast areas of Indian territory. In the sixties, they signed treaties with Burma, Mongolia, Nepal and Afghanistan, but only as a smokescreen to cover their seizure of Indian and Vietnamese territory, and their armed provocations along the common border with the Soviet Union. In the countries with which they had agreed to settle the frontier question, they set up and supported Maoist organizations opposed to the local governments, and created instability in the frontier areas.

The expansionist methods used by Beijing in frontier areas are sometimes "classical" ones, such as used

by all those seeking to grasp foreign territory: dividing the peoples' living on the two sides of the frontier, creating instability in border areas, armed provocations... At other times, specific Chinese methods are applied: claiming areas lying deep inside the neighbouring country's border by drawing a frontier line not corresponding to the recognized one, in order to create "disputed areas", then proposing that these areas should not be controlled by either side, pending a definitive solution; producing fabricated maps and claiming that this or that area was once Chinese territory; sending across the border a number of Chinese who will settle and farm in an area to be eventually claimed by China; giving Chinese names to hundreds of islands and shoals. After claiming a piece of territory as their own, the Chinese will seek to apply a number of administrative measures there, or even incorporate it into a Chinese administrative unit in order to prove Chinese "sovereignty" over it and force the countries concerned to accept China's claim... They may also instigate two neighbouring countries to claim part of each other's territory, or even to fight for their claims, thus weakening both countries and making them more vulnerable to Chinese aggression...

In the past hundred years, no country has provoked as many territorial disputes as China. The areas claimed by Beijing total some 4,500,000 square kilometres.

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Most illustrative of Beijing's expansionist frontier policy are the manoeuvres used against Vietnam.

In the past centuries, China invaded Vietnam many times. The Chinese Court also induced Vietnam's southern neighbours, Champa and Chenla, to attack our country, sometimes in coordination with Chinese armies. When Vietnam and China were on friendly terms or at least at peace with each other, the Chinese would nonetheless provoke incidents and seek to intimidate our people and create instability in our border areas; they would incite chieftains of ethnic minorities to rebel against the central government, then to flee to China and offer territories once under their sway to the Chinese emperor; they would lay claim to some areas, then use pressure or military force to bring them under their control...

Even in a normal situation, Chinese troops were frequently sent across the border to seize cattle, food and land belonging to Vietnamese.

Generation after generation, the Vietnamese people valiantly and tenaciously struggled against China's attempts at assimilation as well as its armed aggressions. By the 19th century, although China still occupied part of Vietnamese territory, the frontier line between the two countries had been stabilized.

In 1887 and 1895, the French Government and the Ching Court signed two conventions on the frontier line between Vietnam and China, on land and on sea (in the Tonkin Gulf). Afterwards, the border was delimited, and solid border markers were erected along the whole frontier line, from the Bac Luan river (in Mong Cai) in the east to the westernmost part of Lai Chau province. In the course of the negotiations, France had ceded to China areas totalling thousands of square kilometres. Nevertheless, our country is willing to accept this frontier line left by history, in accordance with generally accepted principles of international law and practices. In 1957, the Vietnam Workers' Party Central Committee proposed to the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee that the frontier left by history be respected by both sides, and that all territorial and frontier questions that might arise be settled between the central governments of the two countries, to the exclusion of the local authorities. Early in 1958, the Chinese side informed us that the proposal was accepted. But the frontier question was not thereby settled, as expected.

Facts have shown that the leadership of the People's Republic of China continue to pursue the Chinese emperors' policy of expansion and hegemony, with new ambitions and new means. The traditional direction of Chinese expansion is toward Southeast Asia. Vietnam occupies an important position on the way to that part of the world, and for this reason, China has been unceasingly carrying out an anti-Vietnamese policy, resorting to different means, according to its objective at the moment and the state of relations between the two countries: restriction, control or even armed aggression. The frontier policy is an important part of China's general foreign policy.

In the fifties and early sixties, taking advantage of its position as a country then giving direct aid to Vietnam and controlling the only road transiting aid goods to Vietnam from the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, China was able to play the role of a big power participating in the settlement of the first Indochina war. The Chinese thus found an opportunity to create a buffer zone between them and the Americans in South Vietnam, so that they could build up their country and extend its influence in Southeast Asia and the world. During that period, China made a great show of friendship for Vietnam, striving to turn it into a show-case of the benefits of Chinese friendship and lure other newly-independent countries into the Chinese orbit. But in reality, China was carrying a wicked scheme seeking to prolong the partition of Vietnam, and keep our country in an economic situation that was neither strong nor weak.

Regarding the frontier question, even during those years of "friendship", when China was giving some aid to Vietnam, there were a series of Chinese manoeuvres to seize parts of Vietnamese territory. In 1956, two years after the withdrawal of French troops, the Chinese dispatched warships and planes to occupy the eastern part of the Hoang Sa archipelago before the arrival of Saigon troops which were due to take over the islands from the French. On our northern border, abusing the confidence of Vietnamese cadres, the Chinese altered the frontier line south of Huu Nghi Quan (Friendship Gate): in the document recording the completion of the repair of the Yen Vien — Huu Nghi Quan railway section, they mentioned the junction point of the Vietnamese and Chinese railways as lying on the frontier line, when it was actually 300 metres south of the border, on Vietnamese territory. On the highway passing through that area, they replaced the border marker No. 18 erected by the French with a new marker bearing the inscription "Kilometre Zero", this one set up more than 100 metres south of the border. They cunningly seized Vietnam's manganese-rich Phia Un hill, by first asking for permission to set up telephone poles on its slope and later, brazenly asserting that the hill was on Chinese territory, because "otherwise, how could a road have been built and telephone poles erected there?" And when helping Vietnamese border provinces to build water conservation works, Chinese technicians diverted the streams in such a way as to cause them to eat into Vietnamese territory, as happened at Po Hen, Ai Canh, Ba Nam Cum, in the provinces of Quang Ninh, Cao Bang and Lai Chau.

After Kissinger's and Nixon's visits to China, Beijing openly colluded with the US imperialists and openly betrayed the revolution. It continued its anti-Vietnamese policy, as Vietnam refused to toe the Chinese line and resolutely carried on its resistance against US aggression. China still gave aid to Vietnam, but only in order to bargain with the Americans and exert pressure on our country. It was in the frontier question that this pressure was strongest.

Early in 1974, Beijing sent troops with air and naval support to seize the western part of the Hoang Sa archipelago then occupied by the Saigon administration forces, and since then the Chinese have been clamouring more and more loudly that the Truong Sa archipelago also belong to China.

That was a shameful betrayal of the Vietnamese people, then doing their utmost to bring total victory to their national liberation struggle. It was a further move of Chinese expansion into the Bien Dong Sea, in preparation for a drive into Southeast Asia. Meanwhile, more and more Chinese settlers infiltrated across our northern border, and incursions by Chinese troops were stepped up in order to create instability and establish bases for political action and espionage activities. In the Franco-Chinese convention, the frontier line in the Tonkin Gulf was defined as corresponding to the meridian at 108°03'13", but Beijing now refuses to recognize this line, saying that it only serves the purpose of determining sovereignty over the islands. The negotiations held in 1974 between the two countries were deadlocked and Vietnam's plan for oil prospecting and exploitation in that part of its territorial waters was hampered.

After the Pol Pot clique failed to carry out Beijing's scheme to involve Vietnam in a war, and were driven out of Kampuchea, a Chinese invasion army of 600,000 men crossed our northern border, only to be driven back two weeks later, after having been given a severe lesson by the Vietnamese army and people. Since then, the Chinese have been engaging in a many-sided war of sabotage aimed at weakening Vietnam and, at the same time, Laos and Kampuchea, and preparing for an eventual arge-scale aggression. Chinese troops are no longer sent massively across the border, but several army corps are stationed close to the border, forcing Vietnam to be constantly on the alert and in full combat-readiness. Meanwhile, the Chinese war of sabotage is being continued both inside Vietnam and in the international arena.

Along Vietnam's northern border, there are a number of factors which the Chinese are exploiting in their unceasing war of sabotage against Vietnam.

First, the main border markers are few and widely intervaled (1.6 km in Quang Ninh, 60 km in Lai Chau). Between the main markers there are no secondary ones, neither is there any barbed wire or electronic fence;

Second, the border areas are very sparsely populated: only about 200,000 people living along a frontier of 1,400 km;

Third, this population comprises different minority ethnic groups with blood relatives and friends living on the Chinese side of the border;

Fourth, certain Chinese consumer goods are liked by the population in the border areas, and those among them who are not sufficiently conscious of the national interest would exchange local farm and forest products for these industrial goods.

These factors have made it possible for the Chinese to infiltrate spies, recruit collaborators, and establish bases for sabotage activities or an eventual invasion by Chinese main forces. But the Vietnamese people and army are highly vigilant, determined to foil all schemes of the Maoist rulers in Beijing, whose true colours have long been clearly seen.

QUANG LOI

A COMMUNE ON THE VIETNAM-CHINA BORDER

The seat of the People's Committee of Yen Minh commune stands in a small valley of the Na Ten range. Its main meeting room was flooded with electric light. Had it not been for the trenches and shelters near the building and the boom of artillery fired from the Chinese side of the border, we would not have known that the region was in a state or war.

The communal authorities had just held an enlarged meeting attended by an agricultural engineer, a young woman coming from the delta.

Vong Van Din, president of the communal People's Committee, is a member of the Giay minority. He said: "We had two items on our agenda: how to help the victims of the recent shellings and how to farm our 125 hectares of land on schedule. Here on the frontier production and combat should go abreast."

He was a wiry man about 40, with eyes sunken from lack of sleep. All the key cadres I had met so far looked like him — lean, and with dark patches under their eyes.

Yen Minh, a 300-household commune in a district of the same name in Ha Tuyen province, is inhabited by members of six different ethnic groups, mostly Tay, Nung, and Giay. These three minorities belong to the Tay — Thai linguistic group and have many similar customs and habits. These last few years, Yen Minh and its neighbour, Bach Dich, have distinguished themselves for their excellent production work and combat readiness. In spite of Chinese military threats and psychological warfare tricks, the people have clung to their land and carried on their farm work. Their agricultural cooperatives work efficiently and their well-organized militia has been lending effective support to the frontier guards.

Vong Van Din went on: "Our food output has gone up steadily. In 1983, we reaped 200 tons of paddy more than in 1981, and the same amount in 1984. From 4.5 tons/ha, the yearly yield has gone up to 7.6 tons/ha in the same period. Besides maize, our main subsidiary crop, we get 400 kg of paddy per head of population each year. Our food deliveries to the State have been on the increase. We are resolved to produce enough food for ourselves and to contribute our share to the common effort to wage a long war of resistance if need be."

There was a time when the cooperative in Yen Minh underwent ups and downs, merging and separating in turn, and performing rather poorly. The low yields of rice and maize resulted in a decrease in overall food production. As was usual in the highlands, the local inhabitants, while growing wet rice in the valley continued to practise slash-and-burn farming on the hillslopes. In pre-harvest days, when food was short, they would supplement their diet with wild tubers dug up in the forest.

"The vital problem for us is that of food," Vong Van Din continued. "By dint of persevering persuasion, we managed to get our people to settle in the valley and farm terraced ricefields. At first the workpoint system was practised. It provided little incentive and production made no progress. Rice and maize fields were not properly tended and were damaged by free-roaming cattle. Famine threatened. But then the product-based contract system was applied and people began working hard to farm their fields and protect their crops. Even in the first harvest after the test-application of the contract system, rice yields hovered around one ton per hectare."

Nguyen Thi Loi, an agricultural engineer from Vinh Phu, has greatly contributed to this success. After graduating from the Bac Thai Agricultural College, she volunteered for work in the highlands in late 1980. Before going to Yen Minh, she attended a crash course run by the province on the application of the contract system and consolidation of agricultural cooperatives. Together with the Yen Minh cadres, she introduced the highlanders to the new management method.

She has carefully studied local soil conditions and the farming habits of the inhabitants of all 16 villages in the commune. Living a simple and frugal life in

a room by the storehouse, she is well-liked by the local people.

She said: "The important thing is that Yen Minh has overcome most of its weak points in the management of production. However, the new contract system has not yet been fully applied. At present, the cooperative takes charge of four links in the chain of production, namely, supply of seeds, irrigation water, fertilizers, and protection against insects and plant diseases. Sowing and seedling transplanting, tending of the fields, and harvesting are attended to by the co-op members and their families, while the preparation of the soil is jointly undertaken by the cooperative and its members..."

The young engineer and the president of the commune share the view that the new managerial mechanism perfectly suits the local conditions, and has stabilized then boosted production. With their interests thus well taken care of, the peasants have accepted to give up their backward farming methods and gradually apply modern techniques.

"The neutralization of soil acidity, for instance, requires the use of lime," Nguyen Thi Hoi went on. "Both limestone and firewood are available in abundance, yet the cooperative never thought of making lime. Indeed, even if the management had thought of it, there would have been little enthusiasm on the part of the co-op members for this would have simply meant more work with no compensation. But now the proposal to build lime kilns has been promptly accepted, together with the introduction of high-yield rice strains for this means more paddy for everybody. A 15-man team has been set up by the cooperative for the selection of seeds. Formerly, manure was not used here in the highlands, but now the peasants all want more fertilizer for their plots. Of the 11 tons of pigsty manure needed by every hectare of rice-field, the cooperative supplies 8.5 tons. The farmers will find the rest. For purposes of irrigation, many water reservoirs have been built in the mountains, together with a network of canals to supply water to the terraced fields. The cooperative has a herd of 250 buffaloes and oxen while individual peasant families possess 550 head. This provides enough draught force for tilling the fields...

Yen Minh has put on a new face. People still go to the forest to gather wild vegetables and tubers but only to have a change in their diet, not because of hunger. The cooperative has just built three storehouses and a meeting hall with materials made by its members. The new mode of management has also been adopted in forestry. The cooperative has entrusted the care of forestland (77 hectares) to its 300 members. A basic general-education school and a crèche have been built for children of all six ethnic groups. This gives great pleasure to the old folk who often say: "Never did the Yen Minh people enjoy such educational facilities before. It is only natural that they should be resolved to defend their new life. Living within range of the enemy's artillery, they have built solid shelters and organized four militia platoons. This "village army" guards day and night and lends support to the regular troops defending blocking positions on the border. Wave after wave of Yen Minh youth have enthusiastically joined up.

"Ours is truly a fighting commune," Nguyen Van Bao, a member of the Tay minority, and deputy secretary of the communal Party committee, told us. "We are not content with taking care of our own affairs. Each year, each man would work 12 days helping the regular troops build fortifications. Whenever fighting breaks out, we help supply the troops with rice, meat, and firewood. Heavily shelled by the enemy, our neighbour, Bach Dich, has had to evacuate part of its inhabitants here. We gave them rice, and helped them build 44 cottages, and handed over to them part of our arable land for farming."

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We left this small commune on a market day. Though the situation along the border was tense, there was bustling buying and selling, which however, had to begin early in the morning in anticipation of enemy shellings. In the terraced fields where the peasants were working, their rifles were stacked on the dykes. This is how the Vietnamese peasants work in war time: "Rifle in one hand and plough in the other" as was observed during the last two wars of resistance. At the foot of the Na Dong mountain and on the hilltops, we saw solid fortifications linked together by combat trenches.

NGOC DAN

BUILDING UP THE DISTRICT ECHELON: ALL-ROUND DEVELOPMENT FOR 400 DISTRICTS

Editor's Note: At the national summing-up conference on district building held in Hanoi from 3 to 6 October last, To Huu, Politburo member, Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers, and Head of the District Building Commission, delivered an important report. Below is a condensed version of Part One of his report: Assessment of the Situation.

District-building work was first experimented in 1972. We started from a very low level. The district as an economic unit had not taken shape. The district echelon was an intermediate echelon with a purely administrative function. The district had no overall production plan, no infrastructure to speak of, and no economic-technical network. The district was not yet a planning echelon. It had no budget, no managerial responsibilities over the enterprises at the grassroots, and no competent economic and technical personnel...

After a period of study, experimentation, and then expansion to a larger scale the Fourth Party Congress (1976) put forward this guideline: "To build the district into a firm and solid echelon and turn it into a genuine economic unit with an agricultural-industrial structure," and: "To build the district into a managing echelon of the State, an all-sided planning echelon with a budget, an echelon of management over production, circulation, and everyday life in its territory."

In 1978, the Political Bureau issued Directive No. 33 and the Government Council took Decision No. 33 to take practical steps in district building. Some results have been achieved so far.

I — DISTRICT BUILDING PRIOR TO THE FIFTH PARTY CONGRESS

Generally speaking, and at different degrees, the districts are gradually becoming territorial units where production and life are being organized. The district is gradually becoming an echelon for all-sided management of the economy and society. This is shown in various respects:

— Comprehensive programmes have been worked out for two-thirds of the districts, and agricultural and water-conservation programmes for almost all districts throughout the country. Many districts have implemented these programmes successfully and set up zones for special crops, intensive cultivation of rice, subsidiary food crops, industrial crops, etc. Programmes for industry, small industry and handicrafts, transport and communications, capital construction, have been outlined.

— Many material and technical bases have been built in various districts, especially with regard to water conservation, the making of working instruments, draught force, animal and plant breeds, transport and communications, building materials, equipment, trade, etc. Work has begun on the building of a number of techno-economic centres.

— Logging camps, farming, fishing and salt-making cooperatives, small-industry and handicraft cooperatives have been consolidated. At the same time, a number of State-run district factories, stations, farms, shops.. have been built.

— Farming, small-industry and handicraft cooperatives and a number of stations, farms shops and health-care, cultural and educational establishments have been transferred to the district. The district is authorized to work out a comprehensive socio-economic plan; the district budget is assigned fixed figures for revenues and expenditures.

— The structure and standards of the contingent of district cadres have undergone changes. Among the personnel of many districts can now be found college or secondary technical school graduates with experience in economic managerial and technical work.

However, many shortcomings still remain, the two main ones being the following:

— Monoculture of rice is still practised in many places; agriculture is not developed all-sidedly, and industry, wherever it exists, is still divorced from agriculture. Besides, the circulation and distribution of goods receives but inadequate attention.

— There still exist too many sequels of bureaucratic subsidy-

based management and the district still fails to become a full-fledged planning and budgetary echelon.

II — DISTRICT BUILDING SINCE THE FIFTH PARTY CONGRESS

The Fifth Party Congress held in 1982 reaffirmed the policy on district building and stressed: "The district must be regarded as the essential territorial unit where the policy of taking our agriculture to large-scale socialist production is to be carried into effect." In 1983, the Third Plenum of the Party Central Committee laid down nine points to be implemented in this work and Resolution No. 50 of the Council of Ministers marked one step forward in its institutionalization.

Ever since then a new stage has begun in district building. At present, the following tasks are being given a strong boost:

1. To work out, complement, and carry into effect plans and programmes for the district. For each district, the comprehensive programme is being reviewed and amended if necessary; programmes for various branches of activity and for the grassroots units are being elaborated. At present, 210 districts are involved in this work.

2. Devolution of economic management powers and transfer of economic units to the district.

In the production sector, this devolution and transfer has been carried out with regard to farming, small-industry and handicraft cooperatives. It is now being conducted with regard to State-run enterprises. In some provinces, the transfer has been completed of State-run service industries such as tractor stations; water conservation, veterinary and plant-protection units; plant and animal breeding stations; enterprises producing farm implements, doing mechanical repairs, turning out building materials; transport enterprises and cooperatives.

The devolution of managerial powers in goods circulation and distribution is also being stepped up. In spite of occasional bottlenecks and tangles, facts have shown that wherever this devolution is under way the district has become a genuine budgetary echelon holding the initiative in accumulating funds and using them.

Besides fully effecting deliveries of food and other goods to the State, some districts have managed to set up a food and goods fund of their own.

The transfer of health-care, educational and cultural (cinema...) units to the district has been completed in many places.

3. Organization and cadre work is well under way.

Formerly, a district people's committee comprised 16 departments. Now it has expanded into 21 departments while the staff has been reduced from 140 — 160 to 120.

With regard to the upgrading of cadres, according to still incomplete figures, districts in 12 provinces have received since 1983 reinforcements totalling 1,650 college and secondary technical school graduates, while Party schools and administrative schools of the Centre have trained 763 key cadres for the districts while 708 more have attended refresher courses.

III — CONCRETE CHANGES HERALDING A NEW PERIOD OF DEVELOPMENT

1. In agriculture: first of all progress has been noted in the intensive cultivation of rice. Many districts have focused their efforts on water conservation, the use of new strains of plants, working out rational crop schedules, procuring more technical equipment, applying intensive cultivation measures with a view to augmenting yields and output in high-yield ricefields and then in the whole area under rice.

In many districts attention has been paid to producing exportable farm products, developing the cultivation of short-term industrial crops, catching and breeding shrimps, taking care of long-term industrial crops, boosting animal husbandry, especially in the family sector. At the same time efforts

FACTS AND FIGURES

WATER CONSERVATION IN THE DISTRICT

At present, a devolution of responsibilities is under way in the field of water conservation and control. The district will assume management of projects wholly located on its territory and of branch canals located on its territory of greater projects. The rest is under the authority of the Ministry of Water Conservation. District-level enterprises for the management of agricultural water conservation, 185 in number, have been set up mainly in provinces of the North and the northern part of Central Vietnam.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Water Conservation has scrutinized, checked and improved plans of water conservation for 177 districts. Highland districts will combine water conservation with hydropower generating as well as the supply of drinking water to the local people. In the plains, the districts will conduct repair and improvement of the works entrusted to their management and will exploit them in such a way as to serve all cultivation seasons and all crops. In the South, while continuing with the building of major projects, the districts will pay attention to smaller schemes supplying water to groups of several communes each. Plans for eight projects covering 200,000 hectares have been completed.

The watchword "Parallel efforts by the State and the people" has been acted upon successfully. By the end of 1983, irrigation and drainage had been ensured for 17,000 more hectares, while the supply of water had been upgraded for an additional 40,000 hectares. Of the total investments of 570 million dong, State investments amounted to only 140 million. In the first quarter of this year, the districts have invested 106 million, the State 63 million.

At present, in the whole country 15,800 water conservation cadres are working in the districts (760 engineers and 3,050 secondary cadres). Adequate attention is being paid to sending more personnel to the districts in the South, the Central Highlands, and the northwestern highlands.

have been made to combine agriculture with forestry and fishing and promote fishery and forestry.

2. In industry, efforts have been continued to develop small industry and handicrafts working on self-supplied or State-supplied materials (turning out farm implements, building materials, a number of consumer goods and doing mechanical repairs). In addition, progress has been recorded in the following fields:

— Development of small units processing farm products into sugar, alcohol, paper and paper pulp, animal feed. In many districts consumer goods and material for industry are being made in the family and cooperative sectors.

— Production of building materials and upgrading of building workers. Many districts have built brick-and-tile works producing millions of units per year.

— Organizing intra-district and long-haul transport by both rudimentary and mechanized means.

— Building more power transmission lines and sub-stations; building small- and medium-sized hydropower stations run by the district or the cooperative. Some districts have experimented with the use of methane as a source of energy.

3. Improvement in goods circulation and distribution.

— Many districts have fulfilled and even overfulfilled their food delivery quotas and achieved progress in the purchase of grain, other foodstuffs and exportable goods — especially those districts where devolution of powers has been effected.

— Many districts have developed the network of socialist trade, buying-and-selling cooperatives in particular.

— District budgets and revenues have grown. Through self-financing, many districts have invested in economic, cultural, education and welfare development schemes.

4. Building the material and technical infrastructure through self-financing: this is the most recent progress made at the district level. The pace of construction has thus been quickened.

Priority has been given to water conservation. In the highlands, attention has been paid to building small hydropower stations and clearing virgin land. On the coast, efforts have been made to gain ground on the sea. In some districts programmes have been elaborated for urban planning and the rebuilding of cultural, social, trading and administrative establishments.

5. Organization and management

Efforts have been made by many districts to perfect the product-based contract system and strengthen and consolidate the farming, buying-and-selling, and credit cooperatives.

— In the South, great strides have been made in expanding the network of solidarity-for-production teams, and building and consolidating production collectives.

— In many districts, business enterprises have been set up: this is a new form of organization which makes it possible for the district to serve production, purchase products, and improve goods circulation and distribution. By now, there have been organized 398 general trading companies, 197 general equipment companies, 83 food companies, a number of transport companies, insurance companies for plants and animals, export companies, sea and forest-product companies, etc., all run by the district.

6. Improving the people's living conditions.

In many districts the average food consumption has increased, so has the number of dwelling houses, schools, hospitals, houses of culture.

7. Building up national-defence forces at the district level.

By now, 173 districts have been working on programmes to this end. The National Defence Ministry has been paying particular attention to providing guidance for districts on our northern frontier and along the coast.

8. Party building at the district level.

In 1983, the Party Secretariat commended 69 district Party organizations for progress made in displaying dynamism and self-reliance in leadership.

FACTS AND FIGURES

IMPROVEMENT OF PIG BREEDING IN THE COLLECTIVE SECTOR

Over the last few years encouraging progress has been recorded in animal husbandry. The numbers of domestic animals and fowls are on the increase .The herd of pigs has swelled by 3 — 4%. This is essentially due to the development of pig raising by individual peasant families, while the collective sector has declined. The reason for this state of affairs lies in the failure by farming cooperatives to reserve 15% of the area of cropland or of the total amount of food grain grown for the promotion of animal husbandry, as has been laid down in regulations. Worse still, the quantities of food that have been set aside for this purpose are poorly managed or even diverted to other ends. In many co-ops organization and management leave much to be desired.

The agricultural department holds that while efforts should be made to boost pig raising in the collective sector, an impulse should also be given to pig raising by individual peasant families under contracts signed with the cooperatives.

Here are the main guidelines for the collective sector:

— Strict management of the sources of food and processing of protein-rich feed;

— The size of the herd for one farm should be from 200 to 500 head;

— Only crossbred strains are to be raised;

— Active application of scientific and technical achievements;

— Application of the product-based contract system to groups of workers and individual workers.

In those cooperatives where conditions do not yet exist for the raising of large numbers of pigs in farms, this task should be entrusted to individual co-op members under contracts with well-defined economic-technical norms. The cooperatives should lend them assistance by providing them with piglets, feed, materials...

AN INTERVIEW WITH VU TUAN MINISTER OF FOOD INDUSTRY

Question: The food industry is our youngest industry. Could you tell us how it was formed and what have been the favourable conditions and the problems present in the initial stage of its development?

Answer: In 1981, the Council of Ministers decided to set up the Ministry of Food Industry, with jurisdiction over the food-processing factories formerly managed by the Food Ministry, and the State farms specializing in growing food crops, formerly under the management of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of National Defence. Our Ministry was assigned the task of managing the food industry from the cultivation to the industrial processing of such food plants and products as sugarcane, tea, tobacco, vegetal oils, liquor, beer, soft drinks, milk, coffee, confectionery, tinned food and frozen fruit, monosodium glutamate, instant noodle, baby food and salt.

We have founded a number of industrial-agricultural trusts and combined enterprises in order to bring them under unified management and to integrate the planting of industrial crops and the processing of their products.

The climate and soil of our country are propitious to the development of agriculture including such crops as sugarcane, tea, tobacco, coconut, cashew, castor oil trees, groundnut, soybean and many kinds of fruit trees. Another big asset of ours is abundant manpower.

The Communist Party of Vietnam and the Government have strongly encouraged the development of agriculture and consumer goods industries (including the food industry) aimed at meeting the needs of the people and expanding exports.

Besides, the Soviet Union and other countries in the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance have taken a series of special measures aimed at cooperating with Vietnam and helping develop its national economy.

These are basic favourable conditions for the Vietnamese food industry.

On the other hand, it faces such handicaps and difficulties as the dispersal of agricultural resources and the absence of large specialized crop areas. This has prevented us from making full use of the equipment we have. Processing facilities in the localities are inadequate and need new equipment.

Question: Young as it is, our food industry is drawing keen interest from the public. Its products are of relatively high economic value and bring significant revenues to the State, including foreign exchange. Could you tell us something about the characteristics of our food products and how they are appreciated in the country and on foreign markets?

Answer: Our food industry at present still depends mainly on home-grown farm products for its materials. Its products for domestic consumption meet basic requirements in terms of nutritious elements such as starch, fat and vegetal protein. Some export products such as Lua Moi rice wine and tinned pineapple, litchi and rambutan have been awarded gold medals at international fairs.

Each year, the food industry has contributed a fair portion to the national budget.

Question: Some State farms have operated with profit since they came under the Food Industry Ministry. Is it due to the association of planting with processing, or in a broader sense, of industry with agriculture? As far as management is concerned, what about your experience in combining the State sector and the cooperative sector?

Answer: Facts over the past few years show that the integration and cooperation of State farms, cooperatives growing food plants, and processing factories provides a good model of management which has brought about undeniable results.

We have been authorized to organize industrial-agricultural trusts for the production of tea, cane sugar, and vegetal oils, and to set up a number of integrated enterprises. These organizations manage both State farms and processing factories; at the same time they assist specialized cooperatives by providing them with funds and technical guidance in intensive cultivation, and purchase their products.

This integration and cooperation has united factories, State farms and cooperatives in the pursuit of the common goal: increasing productivity, quality and efficiency.

Many farms which used to operate at a loss now have made some profits while factories have been supplied with more materials and the life of the farmers, factory workers, and cooperative members has improved visibly.

Question: What are the main problems facing the food industry in terms of science and technology? How are our products rated in such matters as tastiness and hygiene?

Answer: At present and for some time to come, our food industry will have to concentrate on solving the following scientific and technical problems:

Firstly, we have to continue research on the selection and cross-breeding of plants in order to create breeds of food plants with high productivity and good quality. They must be suited to the soil and climate of Vietnam and the taste of consumers, particularly with regard to export goods.

We have to apply technical advances to cultivation, especially concerning intensive cultivation and plant protection.

Secondly, we have to apply scientific and technological advances achieved in the world to the practical conditions of Vietnam, and especially make the most of progress in microbiology in order to produce highly nutritive foods, increase productivity and lower costs.

Thirdly, we have to strengthen and improve technical management and strictly observe manufacturing processes and norms in order to ensure ever higher productivity and product quality, with respect to tastiness, physical and chemical standards, packing and presentation.

Fourthly, we have to increase our cooperation with the Soviet Union and the other countries in the CMEA in order to broaden the range of our scientific and technological researh and make intensive investments with a view to expanding the existing establishments and building a number of new, modern ones. At the same time, we must cooperate with other branches of our own economy in the manufacture of machine parts and equipment for food processing factories in the country.

Question: Given our increasing home consumption, export trade and need of accumulation for socialist industrialization, what special guidelines and measures will the food industry adopt to meet these demands in the coming years?

Answer: Until 1990, the food industry will concentrate on developing vigorously food crops and processing plants in order to produce more cane sugar, vegetal oils, tobacco, tea, export fruit, milk and other dairy products, liquor, beer, monosodium glutamate, salt... We are aiming at an annual growth rate of 15% in both the central and local industries. The following measures are contemplated:

To cooperate with the various localities in building zones of food crops according to a unified plan for the whole country. These zones will be closely associated with the processing factories, which will thus receive a steady and stable supply of materials.

To practise intensive cultivation and crop rotation and multiplication in order to increase output and quality.

To step up scientific and technical research and application with a view to raising productivity, product quality and economic efficiency.

To carry out intensive investment with regard to the existing processing factories; to build a number of large modern factories.

To guide and help the localities to re-organize production and develop food processing facilities in order to meet the people's needs.

To boost the integration and cooperation of food-crop farms and processing factories and the economic integration of the central and local enterprises in order to make fuller use of the equipment available and increase output and quality.

Question: What are the results and prospects of international cooperation in our food industry?

Answer: Vietnam is a member of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance and our food industry is a member of the Standing Committee on Food Industry of the CMEA.

Thanks to the disinterested and generous assistance of the Soviet Union and cooperation with other CMEA member countries our food industry has developed at a fairly high tempo in recent years. It has helped meet the needs of our people while continuously increasing the volume of its exports.

The CMEA has adopted a resolution on special measures aimed at helping Mongolia, Cuba and Vietnam develop their national economies, including their food industries.

In recent years, Vietnam has also begun cooperating with Laos and Kampuchea in the field of food industry and this cooperation is developing satisfactorily.

We are confident that the cooperation between Vietnam and the Soviet Union and other CMEA countries and our cooperation with Laos and Kampuchea will be a firm guarantee for a vigorous development of the Vietnamese food industry in the years to come.

In addition, we are expanding our cooperation with a number of non-socialist countries on the basis of equality and mutual benefit. We have also received assistance from a number of international organizations.

This cooperation and assistance has created favourable conditions for the young food industry of Vietnam to fulfil its tasks and achieve the targets set for it by the Party and Government.

TEA GROWING AND PROCESSING IN THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

Tea is a plant with a long history of about 5,000 years. It used to grow wild and form forests in some regions of Asia. At present, tea plantations occupy immense areas on the earth. The planting and processing of tea have developed rapidly, yet have fallen short of the ever increasing needs of the world's people.

Tea is a popular beverage. It has a beneficial effect on the human body. In fact, there are in the tea leaves about 200 nutritive elements, including many vitamins, amino acids and soluble minerals. Since time immemorial, people have used tea as a remedy. Scientific research has confirmed its cardiotonic, haemostatic, anti-inflammatory and diuretic effects. Of late, many reseachers have observed that due to its excretory properties, it may help eliminate the noxious effects of some radio-active elements such as strontium 90 causing cancer, especially blood cancer. Abundant consumption of tea has been credited with helping victims of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima recover their health.

Today, tea is drunk in about one hundred countries. According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the consumption of tea in the world has been increasing annually by 2.2 — 2.7% or approximately 30,000 tons. The production of 1.92 million tons of processed tea in 1980 — 81 failed to satisfy market demands.

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Like the African origin of coffee and the American origin of cacao, the Asian origin of tea is beyond doubt. In the opinion of most researchers, the ancient habitat of tea was an immense region covering the province of Yunnan (China), the State of Assam (India), northern Burma, northern Laos and northern Vietnam,. In Vietnam, there have been discovered in the provinces of Ha Tuyen and Hoang Lien Son tens of thousands of wild tea trees some with circumferences measuring as much as three armspans, one of the most famous being the three-century old tea tree at Suoi Giang.

Since long, the Vietnamese people have been drinking tea, fresh or dried (cured). Tea planting and processing was formerly a family occupation in some regions. In the thirties of this century, the French colonialists set up the first large tea plantations at Phu Ho (Vinh Phu province), Cau Dat (Lam Dong), Bien Ho and Bau Can (Gia Lai — Kontum). Their output, however, was insignificant. It was not until the liberation of northern Vietnam in 1954 that, with Soviet technical assistance, tea was truly grown on a large scale. Special regions were delimited for tea planting. The tea processing factory built at Phu Tho in 1957 marked the birth of the tea industry in Vietnam.

In the first Five-Year Plan (1961 — 1965), with Soviet help, 25 tea plantations were set up in the provinces of Hoang Lien Son, Vinh Phu, Bac Thai, Ha Son Binh and Ha Tuyen, together with seven modern tea curing mills. Now new special tea zones have been set up in the South, in the provinces of Lam Dong, Gia Lai — Kontum, Quang Nam — Da Nang, Nghia Binh, Phu Khanh. The tea processing industry in Vietnam boasts twenty curing mills (twelve in the North and eight in the South) not including seven more now under construction and a Soviet-equipped research institute.

Thanks to favourable climatic and soil conditions and the selection of good strains, Vietnamese tea trees give buds for nine months a year.

We can obtain by processing the leaf buds various kinds of tea, different in taste and colour. To comply with the requirements of export and home consumption, Vietnamese tea comprises various kinds:

Black tea. It is not really black but rather orange red of violet blue under close scrutiny. The infusion is dark red and mildly fragrant.

Green tea. The infusion is light green in colour, astringent in taste, and has a strong natural flavour.

Yellow tea. It is processed from tender leaf buds dried in the shade. The leaves have a beautiful dark green or yellow colour. The infusion is yellow or light pink, a slightly astringent taste and delicious flavour.

Aromatic tea. It is prepared from green tea flavoured with jasmine, lotus, soi or ngau flowers. Preparation is quite elaborate and the product is highly valued.

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Tea is a perennial industrial crop. A plant is productive after three years, and may live up to 20 — 30, even 40 — 50 years. The climatic and soil conditions of the highlands and uplands of northern Vietnam and the plateaus of South Central Vietnam are propitious to the growing of tea. It does not take up land reserved for food crops. It helps change the structure of agriculture in Vietnam from an autarkic to a mercantile character. Tea growing on hillslopes helps prevent erosion and increase soil fertility.

Concentrated tea zones have taken shape and material and technical bases have been built. A body of managerial and technical cadres has been formed gradually and is now fairly numerous. In the last few years, production has been reorganized and boosted. Industrial and agricultural enterprises and tea trusts operate under the guidance of the Ministry of Food Industry. Their task is to promote tea growing and processing in regions comprising specialized State farms and cooperatives.

Close cooperation with the Soviet Union in tea growing and processing and for the formation of cadres has opened up bright prospects for the Vietnamese tea industry.

NGUYEN KIM PHONG

OUR STATE FARMS AND THEIR PRODUCTS

+ At present, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam has 370 State farms (120 in the North and 250 in the South) located in 40 provinces and cities (rural suburbs). They are run by the Ministries of Agriculture, Food Industry, and National Defence, and the General Rubber Department.

+ Our system of State farms covers 250,000 hectares of cultivable land, i.e. 3% of cropland in the whole country. Zones specializing in growing agricultural products for export and raw materials for the processing industries have been formed.

+ There are over 60 State rubber plantations in eastern Nam Bo, totalling 120,000 hectares, and producing 45,000 — 50,000 tonnes of dried latex a year.

+ The areas under coffee in Dac Lac and Gia Lai — Kontum provinces comprise four integrated enterprises running more than 20 State farms totalling 15,000 hectares, and producing annually 4,000 — 5,000 tonnes of coffee for export.

+ The 41 State tea plantations in Hoang Lien Son, Lai Chau, Son La, Ha Tuyen, Vinh Phu, Bac Thai and Lam Dong provinces cover nearly 23,000 hectares and produce annually 55,000 tonnes of fresh leaf buds for 12 tea mills.

+ The areas under fruit trees in Nghe Tinh, Thanh Hoa, Ha Nam Ninh, Quang Nam — Da Nang and Kien Giang provinces comprise 45 State farms covering 60,000 hectares and producing annually 15,000 — 20,000 tonnes of oranges, lemons and 40,000 — 45,000 tonnes of pineapples for export.

+ Special areas have been set aside for sugarcane growing in Thanh Hoa, Dong Nai and Tay Ninh provinces; pepper growing in Binh Tri Thien province; and rice growing in the Mekong delta.

+ Stockbreeding State farms now keep a total of 75,500 oxen, more than 15,500 buffaloes and a pig population of 157,800. They are for the most part brood animals or newly imported breeds.

+ The output of State farms is not great in absolute terms but it has been increasing with every passing year. The value of their output has risen from 1.6% of the total output value of agricultural products in 1976 to 6% in 1983. Now their exported products account for 20% of the total value of our exported agricultural products.

+ At present, among our State farms, many good examples have appeared in the reorganizing of production and of economic management leading to higher product quality and economic efficiency. We may cite the pig farms in Hai Phong City, Dong Trieu (Quang Ninh province), the pig and tobacco farm in Tam Dao (Vinh Phu province), the To Hieu maize farm in Son La province, the tea and dairy farm in Moc Chau (Son La province), the Binh Minh jute farm in Ha Son Binh province, the Sao Vang sugarcane farm in Thanh Hoa province, the Pham Van Hai pineaple farm in Ho Chi Minh City, the coffee plantation in Phuoc An (Dac Lac province), etc.

THE YEAR OF THE BUFFALO WILL COME ONE MONTH EARLIER THAN IN THE CHINESE CALENDAR

This means that Tet (Vietnamese Lunar New Year) will fall on 21 January 1985, not on 20 February of the same year as in the old calendar.

Before 1967, the Vietnamese lunisolar calendar was patterned upon the Chinese calendar, against the rules of calendar making. However, for geographical reasons, Beijing time (8th time zone GMT) is one hour ahead of Hanoi time (7th time zone GMT). Since 1967, by decision of the Government Council, Vietnam has been officially classed in the 7th time zone, which has led to discrepancy between the old and new calendar. For this reason the Year of the Monkey (1968) and that of the Cock (1969) came to Vietnam one day earlier than in the Chinese calendar. Likewise, intercalary months in the two calendars differ. According to the rules of calendar making there is no intercalary 10th month in the present Year of the Mouse and next year (Year of the Buffalo — 1985) there will be an intercalary 2nd month. Thus the Year of the Buffalo will begin on 21 January (not 20 February) 1985.

TROPICAL FRUIT FOR EXPORT

Vietnam has a wide range of tropical fruits: pineapple, banana, litchi, longane, mango, guava, jackfruit, etc., which, either fresh or processed, are much appreciated on international market. However, these fruits are not grown in a planned and concentrated way, with little technical investment and low productivity. That is why so far fruit processing for export has not much developed. In the last few years, a plan has been worked out to speed up the growing, storage and processing of fruit in the whole country.

Pineapple accounts for half the volume of exported fruit, followed by banana and orange. The growing of pineapple and banana benefits from favourable climatic and soil conditions nearly over the whole length of the country, i.e. more than 16 degrees of latitude. They can be grown in the uplands of northern and central Vietnam as well as in the Central Highlands. Orange in particular thrives in some regions in the north of central Vietnam and the uplands of northern Vietnam.

Individual farmers formerly and co-op farmers at present are not accustomed to raising fruit trees in concentrated fashion. They regard it as a sideline occupation and an intercalary crop. Hence fruit gathering and processing on a large scale cannot be done easily. This shortcoming is now being removed. Some State farms have specialized in fruit growing while the State has raised the buying prices of fruit and thus encouraged the farmers to grow it on large areas.

In 1976, the first year of the 2nd five-year plan, and the first year of national reunification, the area under pineapple was 16,800 hectares yielding 110,000 tons of fruit. Four years later, in 1980, this area had doubled (38,000 hectares) and output had risen to 320,000 tons.

Orange was grown on 4,200 hectares in 1976 and 63,200 hectares in 1980 (3.66 times over). Output was 24,200 tons in 1976, and only 86,400 tons in 1980 (3.57 times over) due to the aging of the trees. The planting of new trees is thus imperative.

Banana was grown on 32,800 hectares in 1976 and 63.200 hectares in 1980. Output was 440,000 tons (fresh) in 1976 and 809,000 tons in 1980. Of late, the production of banana has increased a little, reaching 1.2 million tons.

Though the planting and harvesting of fruit have made some progress, its collection and processing still leave much room for improvement. In 1980, the fruit processing factories (canning and freezing) collected only 27,000 tons of pineapple (fresh) or 8.44% of total production, 3,100 tons of orange (3.62% of production) and 10,500 tons of banana (1.3% of production).

Due to the shortage of materials, lack of investments and delay in the application of modern technique, the canning industry in Vietnam is far from matching the growing potentials.

The establishment in 1964 in Hanoi of the first export fruit enterprise marked the birth of the fruit canning industry in Vietnam.

A little later, due to the American air and naval war against northern Vietnam, this enterprise was evacuated to the countryside. In that same period, four more fruit processing factories were built in the provinces of Vinh Phu, Hai Hung, Ha Bac and Ha Tuyen.

Before 1975, the processing of fruit for export was still embryonic and was not yet an important foreign currency earner.

In the last few years, this industry has produced such items as sliced pineapple, pineapple tidbits, pineapple juice, banana juice, stewed longane, stewed litchi...

Many export items have received gold medals at international fairs. Nam Ha sliced pineapple (Leipzig 1976), Hanoi pineapple juice (Leipzig 1976) Hai Hung canned litchi (Leipzig 1980), Son Tay sliced pineapple (Plovdiv 1978), and Vinh Phu pineapple tidbits (Plovdiv 1981).

In the coming years, it is expected that Vietnam will export each year 20,000 tons of pineapple, 10,000 tons of orange, and 20,000 tons of banana. A programme has been elaborated for the development of so far neglected fruits such as litchi, longane and mango. This programme also deals with the production of fruit syrup, spirits and wine, which are in much demand even on the home market. According to this programme, Vietnam will step up cooperation with the Soviet Union, Hungary and the GDR in many respects: the development of fruit plantations, fruit canning and cold storage.

NGUYEN CHU

ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES IN A CITY WARD AND THE ROLE OF THE YOUTH UNION

Over the past three years, Ward 24 in Tan Binh district, with a population of 11,000, has become one of the thriving wards of Ho Chi Minh City. Handicraft production has developed rapidly, from an output value of 12 million dong in 1980 to 33 million in 1983, and at least 34.5 million this year (in 1980 prices). One hundred kinds of commodities totalling 200 varieties have been turned out and sold not only in Vietnam but also abroad. The number of unemployed has been brought down from 4,000 to a mere 54.

The ward has set up a 40-man group to buy up waste material, from empty bottles to scrap metal and rubber. These are roughly processed before being handed over to production cooperatives and teams. This mass of over 7,000 tons of scrap material accounts for 70% of the raw materials used by them, a very important contribution to the fulfilment of the ward's production plan. To get more materials, finished products are sent in exchange to various provinces and even exported abroad. This complements the supply of materials by the State.

The skills of people living in the ward are made the most of. A scientific and technical group was established when the ward began organizing handicraft production. It was composed of 48 men, including 3 with post-graduate training, 28 engineers and 17 skilled workers. It has restored the Tan Hoa Long paint factory, the Hai Duong fish-brine enterprise and many other production bases with expatriate owners. It has managed to turn out several formerly imported chemicals used in tanning, and designed a 200-ton hydraulic press and a 120-ton stamping machine. By applying appropriate techniques, the ward has not only overcome many difficulties in production but also produced many new items: mercury-vapour lamp, small radio set (Silver medal at the National Economic and Technical Fair in 1983), gelatin capsule for medicine, etc.

At present the ward has three cooperatives, 10 production teams, and 121 supporting individual production bases. Not content with approving contracts, it takes in hand control over raw materials, technique, machines, equipment and producers, and arranges contracts for production bases in the collective sector — 316 contracts in 1983 to the value of 200 million dong.

The ward has sought to improve its management. For instance, the Tan Hung leather cooperative comprises more than 40 workshops. In the past, each family would undertake the whole process of leather making. Now a number of them would do the initial processing; others would tan the hides; others still would give the leather the proper finish. As a result, raw materials are well managed in both quantity and quality. With regard to the individual producers, supervision is done according to the trade they engage in: dyeing, making of plastic goods, metal goods, rubber goods, wrapping materials, etc. By exercising control over materials, equipment, manpower and power consumption, the ward controls the output of each family. It delivers 85% of the products to the State and hands over the remainder to consumer cooperatives for exchange with the farmers.

Tan Phuoc market in Ward 24 was set up in 1983 according to the watchword "Joint efforts by the State and the people" with the district contributing 800,000 dong and the ward 2.2 million dong. The ward supervises the activities of 300 small traders in 13 branches. The consumer cooperative has five subsidiaries and a delivery van. Living conditions have been gradually bettered. In the productive sector, a worker would earn between 1,500 and 4,000 dong a month. A 500,000 dong welfare fund is set up for relief to families of disabled soldiers and war martyrs as well as for purposes of social insurance.

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In the past, Ward 24 was called Lo Da hamlet, belonging to Phu Tho Hoa commune, Gia Dinh province. Under US-puppet rule, it was notorious for such places as Dieu garden, Ham church and Dau Doc crossroads where thugs and other criminals ruled the roost. Now they have been reformed through honest labour.

In the vigorous effort to develop handicraft production, the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union has stood in the van. It began by conducting an inquiry among the unemployed, surveying their cultural level and aptitude for work. Then it has helped the authorities in placing them in various cooperatives and handicraft bases. Young people with technical knowhow are sent to join technical teams. The Union has strengthened its ranks by recruiting elements who have distinguished themselves by working hard and observing labour discipline. It has also organized youth brigades to look after product quality, safeguard collective property and struggle against theft of electrical current. Youth members would come forward for difficult tasks, like the cooling down of products in the glassware cooperative. Only a few months of activity have been enough for the youth organization to assert its usefulness: all the heads of cooperatives and production teams now recognize its indispensable role in organizing emulation drives and enhancing product quality. Thus a rule has been established by Party and State authorities whereby the youth organization would have one day off each month for its activities. In the individual production sector, the Union has persuaded its members to report faithfully on product output and quality, thus providing the authorities with data with which to control other individual producers.

In all the five neighbourhoods of Ward 24, the Youth Union is the pace-setter in the fulfilment of the tasks of the ward, with 15 branch organizations to guide the youth in managing the market, keeping order and security, carrying out preventive hygiene and conducting cultural and artistic activities. Through these activities the Union has gathered most of the youth in its various organizations, thus creating a healthy environment for the young people to live and work in.

PHAM DAO

SOLDIERS HELP BUILD THE LOCAL ECONOMY

The First Military Region on the Vietnam — China frontier is a rugged mountain area with a thin population made up of various ethnic groups and a low level of economic development.

The Command of the Military Region has paid great attention to army participation in building the local economy because such a development will create a firm logistic base for the armed forces stationed there.

The problem is how to do it. Of course, the armed forces can't engage in every field of economic building. So the Command focuses on making the most of existing possibilities in order to boost production, helps resolve outstanding problems in local economic development and ensure on-the-spot supply for the troops.

The weakest link in the local economy is food production as crop yields are still low. The soldiers have on the one hand grown food for themselves and on the other, help the local people build small irrigation projects (reservoirs, canals), develop experimental plots, produce good animal and plant breeds (piglets, fry) and apply appropriate techniques in soil improvement and water control. Thanks to better intensive cultivation, rice yield has risen to 5.7 tons per hectare per crop. This has encouraged the local people to adopt scientific and technical measures in their farm work.

To help overcome the energy shortage, the soldiers have built a series of small hydropower stations. This has suggested a new orientation and helped work out plans for supplying electricity to the highlands.

Another difficulty facing the highlands is the lack of building materials. The Command of the Military Region has had studies conducted to produce building materials on the spot to save transport costs. As a result, almost all army units in the region have built limekilns, brick-and-tile kilns and are now producing annually 16 — 20 million baked bricks, 450,000 sundried ones, 3 million tiles and 4,000 tons of lime, etc. With materials produced by themselves they have built a large number of houses. Their example has encouraged local people to make their own building materials.

Army units also take part in afforestation, road building, growing tobacco, tung trees and other oil-bearing trees, and soybean for export, as well as producing consumer goods.

Finally, a comprehensive system for organization and guidance has been set up, comprising an economic bureau at the level of the military region and economic committees in every provincial and corps command. Their task is to assist the commanders work out plans and supervise their implementation. With regard to the building of small hydropower stations in particular, the Military Region has set up a special commission staffed by competent technical cadres. Likewise, in order to solve complex problems arising in production, a core force of technicians has been mustered.

MINH QUANG

CULTURAL LIFE IN A CITY WARD

Any visitor to Da Nang immediately after liberation will surely remember the area around Cho Con, the main market in the centre of the city. It was a major shopping centre but also the sinkhole of this garrison town. In its ill-famed roads running through Duong Ray, Chuoi and Ma Tay hamlets, people would get mugged in broad daylight. The city was liberated in March 1975, but although the repressive administration has been swept away, the society as a whole needed to be remoulded.

Hai Chau Ward — as the place is now called — was inhabited by over 14,000 people, most of them doing odd jobs: keeping parking lots for bicycles, selling refreshments and cigarettes, buying and selling whatever goods were available, many of them being contraband or stolen goods... Here vices throve and made the place a headache for the ward cadres.

The local authorities are quite aware that to do away with such social evils, it will not suffice to look after the people's material life. They know

that cultural activities can bring people together and cause them to be attached to their ward. But a cultural life is something quite new for the local population. Under the former regime, the city had no newspaper, no publishing house, no public library, no art troupe, and no theatre, although there were plenty of tea houses and a few movie theatres. There was not a single patch of green, let alone a public garden. A giant barrack it was indeed.

A major change in Hai Chau Ward over the past years has been the creation of a new cultural environment, a communal cultural life. Formerly, cultural enjoyment was reserved for people of means and leisure. At present, it is organized by the ward and is within reach of everybody. In the old days, for instance, many working people never set foot in a movie house because they were too busy earning a living. Now films are shown in an open-air theatre nearby and people would drift in, if only to "have a look".

Another achievement by the ward in recent years has been the building of a house of culture and a public address system.

The house of culture was founded in June 1981. The ward is allowed to use 35% of its budget for cultural, educational and medical activities, in addition to the receipts of its mobile film-projection team. The house of culture relies mainly on contributions by the local youth and intellectuals. It has a "tradition room", (i.e. a small museum), an exhibition room and is the seat of a few clubs. A talk is held twice a month, and attendance is sometimes such that people will spill over onto the pavement outside. Whenever a noted writer, musician or professor passes through the town, he would be invited to talk to the local population.

A form of activity of the house of culture is the clubs. The first club was organized for the youth and children. Every year, the summer holidays would bring effervescence to this club. In cooperation with the schools, the house of culture would organize artistic activities and summer camps for pupils. As a result, fewer and fewer children roam about in the streets, and commit misdemeanors or fall victim to accidents. A musical club also attracts many participants: 15 singers and 8 instrumentalists including a 74-year-old man who used to play music for religious rituals and has now become a teacher of traditional musical instruments. A physical culture club was set up in July 1982 with two coaches in traditional martial arts. With the help of the Women's Union a home-making club was established in October 1983 where young girls are taught embroidery, knitting and cooking. The first batch of 80 learners are now working in the embroidery teams of the ward, turning out marketable goods. In September 1983, the population decided to turn a temple which used to be the venue of sorcerers, mediums and their like into a public reading room. Then in 1984, a cinema club and a pensioners'club came into being.

In the past, people in the ward maintained little social intercourse, except business dealings. At present, thanks to the house of culture, more and more people have got to know one another, especially among the youth. This has proved conducive to friendship and social harmony. The house of culture has opened its doors even to former members of the puppet administration and army, musicians and painters in particular. One hundred of them are now active in the clubs, four times the number of cultural cadres appointed by the ward. The head of the house of culture is a former sergeant of the Saigon puppet army who has grown aware of his responsibilities as a citizen in the new regime.

Thanks to its activities, the house of culture, without actually setting itself this task, has helped fill the gap between former resistance members and former collaborators of the puppet army and administration, and between manual and brain workers. It also serves as a link between the authorities and the people who are asked to make proposals and express opinions on public affairs. This they do, and in a more relaxed way than they would have done in formal meetings at the seat of the People's Committee.

DAO HUNG

CHRONOLOGY • CHRONOLOGY

(16 October — 15 November)

OCTOBER

17. **Vientiane:** Holding of the first conference of the sub-commission for cooperation in communications and transport between Vietnam, Kampuchea and Laos.

19. A delegation of the Congolese Party of Labour, led by Jacques Nicolas Mvononze, Secretary of the Party Central Committee in charge of propaganda and agitation, pays a friendship visit to Vietnam.

— **Hanoi:** Signing of an agreement on goods exchange and payment for 1985 between Vietnam and Mongolia.

22. A delegation of the People's Chamber of the German Democratic Republic, led by Erich Muckenberger, Political Bureau member of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, and head of the Party Central Control Commission, pays an official visit to Vietnam.

— Holding in Hanoi of a seminar on "Vietnam and UNICEF" to promote cooperation between Vietnam and this international organization.

23. **Warsaw:** Holding of the 9th session of the Commission for Economic and Technological Cooperation between Vietnam and Poland.

24. On the occasion of United Nations Day (Oct., 24), Chairman of the SRV Council of Ministers Pham Van Dong receives representatives of various international organizations in Hanoi.

25. **Hanoi:** Chairman of the Council of Ministers Pham Van Dong receives French historian Charles Fourniau, General Secretary of the France — Vietnam Friendship Association.

27. A Vietnamese Party and Government delegation, headed by Nguyen Dinh Tu, member of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee and Minister of Higher Education and Secondary Vocational Education, leaves for Algiers to attend the celebrations of Algeria's 30th National Day.

— **Hanoi:** Signing of a protocol on goods exchange and payment for 1985 between Vietnam and Laos.

— The Secretariat of the Communist Party of Vietnam issues a directive on pushing vigorously the drive for a new lifeway, the elimination of superstitions and social evils, and the elimination of reactionary cultural trash.

28 — 29. **Havana:** Opening of the 39th session of CMEA. A Vietnamese Government delegation, led by To Huu, Political Bureau member of the Communist Party of Vietnam and Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers, attends the session.

— Vietnamese Minister of Foreign Affairs Nguyen Co Thach pays an official friendship visit to the Soviet Union. On behalf of the SRV Council of State, he confers the Ho Chi Minh Order on A.A. Gromyko, member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPSU, First Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, on the occasion of his 75th birthday.

29. A spokesman for the SRV Ministry of Foreign Affairs issues a statement rejecting the erroneous UN resolution on the so-called "Kampuchea issue".

NOVEMBER

1. The SRV Council of Ministers decides that three days of mourning be observed throughout the country for the late Indian Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi.

— High-ranking Vietnamese Party and State leaders pay their last tribute to the late Indian Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi at the Indian Embassy in Hanoi.

2. A delegation of the SRV Council of State, headed by President Truong-Chinh, leaves for New Delhi to attend the funeral of the late Indian Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi.

3. A commemorative ceremony for the late Indian Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi is held in Hanoi.

7. **Hanoi:** A grand meeting is held to celebrate the 67th anniversary of the Great Russian October Revolution.

9 — 10. Two successive days of heavy rains on Nghe Tinh province and northward up to the Red River delta cause great damage to rice and other crops, and property (560 mm. of precipitation in Hanoi). This is the heaviest rainfall at this period of the year for nearly 100 years.

10. Nguyen Duc Tam, Political Bureau member and Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee, pays a friendship visit to the Soviet Union.

12. The USSR Supreme Soviet delegation, headed by V.I. Dolgikh, deputy to the USSR Supreme Soviet, alternate Political Bureau member and Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, pays an official friendship visit to Vietnam.

13. Vietnamese Foreign Trade Minister Le Khac visits the Republic of India.

14. Chairman of the Council of Ministers Pham Van Dong receives Professor Marcel Autret, Honorary Director of the Nutrition Department of FAO.

— **Berlin:** The Dietz Publishing House under the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany makes a token presentation to Vietnam of the Vietnamese translation of the 6-volume Selected Works of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels.

Index 1984

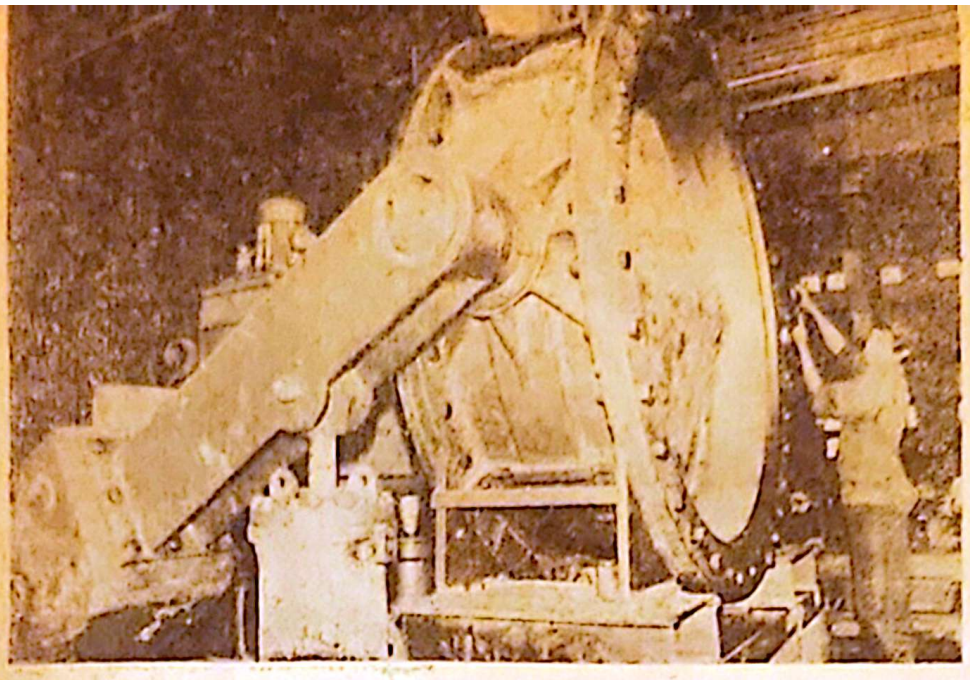
ARTICLE	AUTHOR	ISSUE	PAGE
EDITORIALS			
— A year of remarkable progress		1	1
— A new situation on the Indochinese peninsula		3	1
— Foreword (special issue about Dien Bien Phu)		4	1
— Vigilance		8	1
— On the impetus of our revolutionary achievements		9	1
— Peace one and indivisible		12	1
FOREIGN POLICY AND INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS			
General			
— CMEA and the developing countries	VU CAN	7	1
— Firm and lasting solidarity between Vietnam and India	DANG HOI XUAN	10	1
— Extremely fine prospects of Vietnam — India relationships	The Daily NHAN DAN	11	1
— The Socialist Republic of Vietnam and major international problems		11	2
— Message of Condolences		12	3
Southeast Asia			
— While strolling down Espana avenu	TRAN QUOC VUONG	3	12
— The present situation in Southeast Asia. The crux of the matter	PHAM BINH	10	8
— Thailand — The main prop and most efficient tool of the imperialist and expansionist forces against Laos		11	7
Indochina			
— Communique of the eight conference of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Laos, Kampuchea and Vietnam		3	5
— Interview with Minister of Foreign Affairs Nguyen Co Thach		5	1
— A new stage in cultural relations between Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea	TRAN NGOC LIU	6	8
— Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach's interview with Vietnam News Agency and Vietnam Television		8	11
Laos			
— The Nam Non bridge — Another kind of friendship between Vietnam and Laos	NGUYEN THE NGHIEP	9	11
— Memorandum of the Lao Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the occupation of three Lao hamlets by Thailand		10	13
— The path of revolutionary struggle in Laos		12	4
— Wholehearted support to the Lao people's defence of their territorial sovereignty	The Daily NHAN DAN	12	6
— Xieng Khouang today	NGUYEN THE NGHIEP	12	6
Kampuchea			
— Rebirth and renovation of cultural life	NGUYEN BAC	1	30
— A Vietnamese colleague's advice	DAI DONG	2	27

ARTICLE	AUTHOR	ISSUE	PAGE
— A Vietnamese battalion in a Kampuchean district	TRINH PHU VIEN	2	29
— Japanese lives saved in Kampuchea	NGUYEN QUY	3	29
— New victories of Kampuchean diplomacy	LE DAN	5	4
— The sixth spring of revival	LE BA THUYEN	7	14
— The Vietnam People's Army and its internationalist obligations	The Daily People's Army	8	2
— The Chinese rulers' crimes against Kampuchea. White book issued by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of Kampuchea		9	6
— Achievements in education in the People's Republic of Kampuchea		10	15
— Major landmarks of the Kampuchean Revolution		11	10
— Mr Sihanouk still a prisoner of Beijing and the Polpotists ?	The Daily NHAN DAN	12	9
China			
— Facts that cannot be denied	QUANG LOI	1	3
— China and the third world	LE TINH	1	4
— Five years ago — The one-month war	VU CAN	3	11
— Hot War	DAI DONG	5	5
— A collusion fraught with serious consequences	NGUYEN HUU CHINH	5	29
— The vice built by Beijing for the Indochinese peninsula	MINH TAM	6	1
— Denunciation of China's war escalation and aggravation of tension along Vietnam — China border		7	3
— Deceit elevated to a state policy	LE BINH	7	9
— Beijing's frontier policy	QUANG LOI	12	11
Socialist Countries			
— When friendship rests on Internationalism	VU CAN	8	4
— A visit to Kalinin's birthplace	VU CAN	11	4
Other Problems			
— US imperialists' outrageous actions	The Daily NHAN DAN	2	11
— A dangerous development in Sino - American relations	The Daily NHAN DAN	6	26
— A correct and inevitable decision	The Daily NHAN DAN	6	29
— Statement of the Vietnam Olympic Committee		6	29
— Africa's most dangerous foe	The Daily NHAN DAN	7	14
— Our stand is just and clear	The Daily People's Army	8	12
— The American hoax	The Daily NHAN DAN	9	12
Ideological Problems			
— The Communist International and the Indochinese Revolution	NGUYEN THANH	2	8
INTERIOR POLICY			
General			
— For and with the whole country let Ho Chi Minh City make socialism a success		1	7
— Fifth plenum of the Central Committee of the CPV		2	1
— Orientation, tasks and essential objectives of the 1984 socio-economic plan and objectives for 1985		2	4
— The 7th session of the 7th National Assembly		8	5
— The sixth plenum of the Central Committee of the CPV		9	2
— 39th anniversary of the August Revolution and National Day		10	7

ARTICLE	AUTHOR	ISSUE	PAGE
— Nationalities in Vietnam and the nationality policy of the Communist Party of Vietnam		11	30
— Building up the district echelon: All-round development for 400 districts		12	16
Other Problems			
— Dien Bien Phu Why and How	HOANG VAN THAI	4	2
— Paramount significance of the great Dien Bien Phu victory and the winter-spring victory	VO NGUYEN GIAP	4	7
— Vietnamese artillery in Dien Bien Phu	THAI HA	4	11
— Dien Bien Phu reports from front correspondents		4	18
— Dien Bien Phu — where man faced trials	TON THAT TUNG	4	20
— Medical workers at Dien Bien Phu	TU GIAY	4	21
— The raid on Gia Lam airfield	NGUYEN DUC TOAI	4	26
— Hanoi at the time of Dien Bien Phu	NGUYEN BAC	4	28
— Da Nang revisited	NGUYEN KHAC VIEN	5	6
— Opening the trail	VO BAM	5	9
— Some data (On the Ho Chi Minh Trail)	NGUYEN THUONG DAT	5	13
— Supply trucks moving down the trail in daylight	LE XI	5	15
— Defending storage depots on the Ho Chi Minh Trail	HONG KY	5	19
— The Dien Bien Phu victory and its significance	TRUONG-CHINH	6	3
— Statement of the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on the airspace of Vietnam		7	5
— Complete and exclusive sovereignty over our airspace	VU PHI HOANG	7	6
— Statement of the spokesman for the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Ministry of Foreign Affairs of 2 June 1984		7	7
— Hoang Sa and Truong Sa in the writings of a great 18th century scholar	VIET CHUNG	7	7
— From Dien Bien Phu to Geneva	NGUYEN THANH LE	7	10
— Fifty-five years of activities of Vietnamese trade unions		8	6
— The Vietnam Democratic Party and the Vietnamese revolution		8	9
— Hanoi thirty years after	NGUYEN KHAC VIEN	10	8
— Hanoi: from consumer city to industrial city	NHAN DANG	11	12
— Consolidation of national defence, defence of our socialist homeland	VAN TIEN DUNG	11	16
— The new mechanism for party leadership in the army		11	20
— The forerunners of the Vietnam People's Army	NGUYEN NGOC	11	21
— Our young armoured force		11	22
— From military air transport to civil aviation	VIET CHUNG	11	23
— The "dac cong", a special arm of the Vietnam People's Army	DAI DONG	11	23
— The birth of a revolutionary army corps	CHINH YEN	11	28
— A commune on the Vietnam — China Border	NGOC DAN	12	14
ECONOMY			
General			
— Ho Chi Minh City and the economic development of the region		1	10
— Vietnam's economy in 1983 — Impact of new economic policies	VIET CHUNG	2	12
— Evidence of an upswing in the economy	LE VAN	5	27
— The formation of a new contingent of socialist workers	AN THANG	6	9
— Some problems of economic management	The Daily NHAN DAN	8	14
— Economic management in Ho Chi Minh City	LE VIET CHUNG	8	18
— Experience of Ho Chi Minh City in food (rice) trade and distribution	The Daily NHAN DAN	8	21

ARTICLE	AUTHOR	ISSUE	PAGE
— Improved economic management in Haiphong port city	The Daily NHAN DAN	8	23
— Experience gained by an upland province in economic management	The Daily NHAN DAN	8	26
— On the renovation of economic management	LE DUAN	10	3
— A change in economic management		11	12
— An interview with Vu Tuan, Minister of Food Industry		12	19
— Facts and figures		12	17
Agriculture			
— Progress in rice production in central Vietnam	VU CONG THAO	1	18
— Intellectuals in Ho Chi Minh City help build high-yield ricefields	VIET THAO	1	21
— An initial survey of the Mekong river delta	TRAN DINH GIAN	1	22
— Agro-industrial economic structure in a district	LE VAN PHONG	2	16
— The experiences of the coastal provinces of central Vietnam	NGUYEN GIA NGO	3	14
— Former offenders build new economic zone	DAO HUNG	6	11
— Transforming saline and aluminous fields by irrigation		6	14
— The drive to get ten tonnes of paddy per hectare	TRONG AN	6	15
— The rice-growing civilization in Vietnam	DAO THE TUAN	6	16
— Pine resin of Mang Den		6	20
— How subsidiary food crops are used in Dong Nai province — A rational approach	LE XUAN	7	23
— Shrimp rearing in Minh Hai	TRAN QUOC THAO	7	25
— A production collective in the Mekong delta	XUAN MINH	8	29
Other problems			
— Floating villages	THE NGHIA	3	19
— Advances in snake raising in Vietnam	LE PHU KHAI	3	21
— Mechanics of fluids and Vietnamese problems	NGUYEN VAN DIEP	3	23
— The Indian trade exhibition in Hanoi	VIET CHUNG	5	28
— The Thang Long bridge on the Red River	NGOC THAO	6	19
— Tea growing and processing in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam	LE VAN	12	21
— Tropical fruit for export	LONG HA	12	23
— Economic activities in a city ward and the part played by the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union	PHAM DAO	12	24
— Soldiers help build the local economy	MINH QUANG	12	25
— Our state farms and their products		12	22
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL PROBLEMS			
Culture and Arts			
— The one-pillar pagoda	THAI VI LANG	1	29
— Cheo — A traditional dramatic genre	HUNG QUANG	2	19
— The "five-fruit tray" at Tet	TO LAN	2	21
— Tet festival in Tay Nguyen	P. A.	2	22
— Collecting and preserving books and documents in han and nom	TRAN NGHIA	2	25
— In Tay Son country	NGUYEN KHAC VIEN	3	8
— Stele inscriptions in Vietnam	HOANG LE	3	26
— In heaven's country	DANG MINH	4	16
— A painter fallen in the field of honour	NGOC THANH	4	22
— Film makers in Dien Bien Phu	NGUYEN THU	4	26
— Three meetings with the Vietnamese cinema	ROBERT MICHEL	5	25
— The bronze drum and the craftmanship of ancient bronze casters	TO LAN	7	29
— Literature for children since the August Revolution	VAN THANH	9	13
— Tradition — An inexhaustible theme	LE CAN	9	16
— Nature, wild life, man	DAI DONG	9	18
— Literature for children in zones occupied by the Americans and their puppets	LUU NGHI	9	20
— Cultural life in a city ward	DAO HUNG	12	25

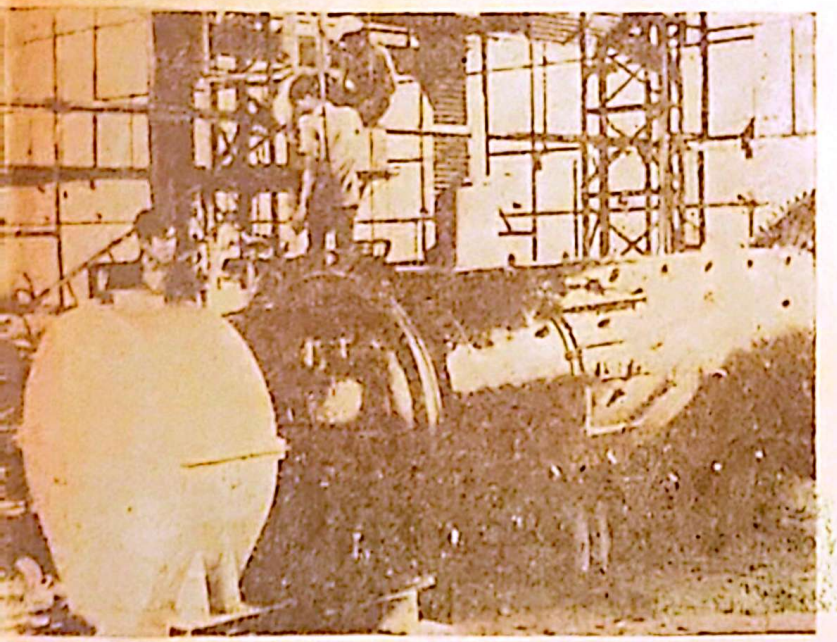
ARTICLE	AUTHOR	ISSUE	PAGE
Health and Education			
— Adult education in rural areas	NGO NHAT QUANG	1	27
— Care of deaf and dumb children in Vietnam	PHAM KIM	3	24
— Children help in health work	LA VINH QUYEN	6	26
— Combating lepsory in a district	LE KINH DUE	6	31
— New trend in the teaching of agriculture in Vietnam	TRAN VAN HA	9	30
— Interview with Education Minister Nguyen Thi Binh		10	16
— Some positive changes in education	NGUYEN VAN HANH	10	19
— Vocational guidance and job training for pupils of general education schools	PHAM TAT DONG	10	20
— Vocational guidance in a coastal commune	TRAN ANH	10	21
— Pre-school education in Vietnam: Parallel efforts by the State and the people	TRAN THI TINH	10	22
— New shoots on barren land	PHAM MY	10	25
— Educational development in a commune heavily damaged by war	LE KHAC HOAN	10	26
— Educational progress in a highland commune	NGUYEN VAN QUY	10	27
— Education work in a vanguard district	LE KHAC HOAN	10	24
— Vuong Kiem Toan — An oustanding figure in adult education	DOAN MAU CON	10	27
— How an invalid becomes an oustanding kindergarten teacher	HOANG MINH TUONG	10	29
— Vietnam at International Mathematical Olympiads	LE HAI CHAU	10	30
— General technological education centre in Haiphong		10	31
Science and Society			
— Vietnamese Catholicism 1983	HOANG NGUYEN	1	14
— Settlement of nomadic minorities in Vietnam	CU HOA VAN	2	14
— A comprehensive survey of our southern coastal area	DANG NGOC THANH	3	22
— Dien Bien Phu — The land and the people	DINH XUAN LAM and DANG NGHIEM VAN	4	6
— Dien Bien Phu — In the hour of socialism	LE DAN	4	16
— Vietnamese civilization at the first stage of national independence	TRAN QUOC VUONG	6	21
— The Da Lat nuclear reactor	PHAM DUY HIEN	6	25
— Economic and defence measures in a border district	VAN LUNG	6	30
— From Cao Thuong to Ban Trang	TO HOAI	7	18
— The dream of an agricultural co-op manager	DAO HUNG	7	20
— The right direction taken by a commune in South Vietnam	THIEN ANH	7	22
— A pioneer: Dao Duy Anh	NGUYEN KHAC VIEN	8	13
— Changes in a coastal district	LE DIEN	8	28
— Capital construction: The past three years and the coming two years		8	30
— The ancient town of Hoi An	NGUYEN HANH	8	31
— Professor Dang Thai Mai is no more		11	6
— Vietnam at a World competition on "Tomorow's Habitat"	DANG TO TUAN	11	15
— The year of the buffalo will come one month earlier than in the Chinese calendar		12	22
Short Stories			
— The apricot flower	VU CAN	2	24
— Coconut — A Vietnamese legend		3	30
— The A Vung stream	CHU VAN	5	22
— The woodcutter and his magic guitar.	VU CAN	7	26
— Crocodile hunting	DOAN GIOI	9	23
— Phay Phay — The fighting dog	VU HUNG	9	25
Chronology			
— Chronology appears in every issue on the last page			



1. Assembling a 1,000-kw hydropower turbine generator.

Photo: TRAN SON

LOCAL INDUSTRY IN VIETNAM



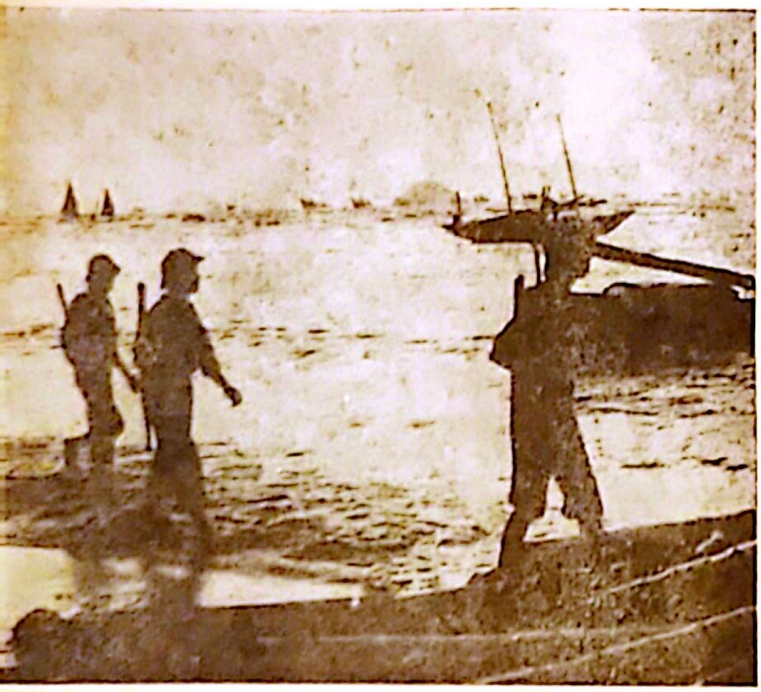
2. Installing a 2-ton hour cement grinder.

Photo: DOAN VIET

3. A 4AV-80 refrigerator produced by the Hanoi Refrigerating Equipment Factory.

Photo: TRAN SON

ACTIVITIES ON THE OCCASION OF THE 40th ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE VIETNAM PEOPLE'S ARMY (22 DECEMBER 1944 – 22 DECEMBER 1984).



Vietnam courier

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